SAMURAI COMMANDO

MISSION 1549

Art by Ark Performance
Story by Harutoshi Fukui
Original idea by Ryo Hanmura

1

SAMURAI COMMANDO

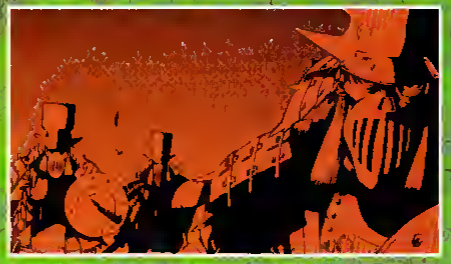
Ark Performance
Harutoshi Fukui
Ryo Hanmura

1

Modern day soldiers go back in time to Japan's Civil War period...and threaten the course of history!

A military test accidentally sends a unit from Japan's Self-Defense Forces back in time to their country's feudal past. When their actions begin to alter the present, a second unit is dispatched to retrieve them. But Colonel Matoba, commander of the lost battalion, is determined to use his advanced technology to conquer Japan and change his country's destiny. It's up to Kashima, Matoba's former protégé, to stop him. But he only has a narrow window of time, and it is rapidly closing.

Based on the novel by the award-winning Japanese writer Ryo Hanmura.



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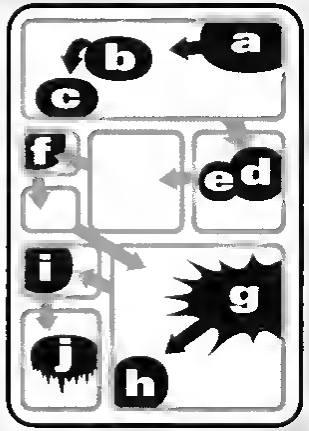
T+ TEEN PLUS
VIOLENCE

All the pages in this book were created—and are printed here—in Japanese RIGHT-to-LEFT format. No artwork has been reversed or altered, so you can read the stories the way the creators meant for them to be read.

FLIP IT!

RIGHT TO LEFT?!

Traditional Japanese manga starts at the upper right-hand corner, and moves right-to-left as it goes down the page. Follow this guide for an easy understanding.



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KNOW WHAT'S INSIDE

With the wide variety of manga available, CMX understands it can be confusing to determine age-appropriate material. We rate our books in four categories: EVERYONE, TEEN, TEEN + and MATURE. For the TEEN, TEEN + and MATURE categories, we include additional, specific descriptions to assist consumers in determining if the book is age appropriate. (Our MATURE books are shipped shrink-wrapped with a Parental Advisory sticker affixed to the wrapper.)

E

EVERYONE

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T

TEEN

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T+

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M

MATURE

Titles with this rating are appropriate only for mature readers. They may contain graphic violence, nudity, sex and content suitable only for older readers.

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SAMURAI COMMANDO

MISSION 1549

Volume 1

Art by Ark Performance
Story by Harutoshi Fukui
Original idea by Ryo Hanmura

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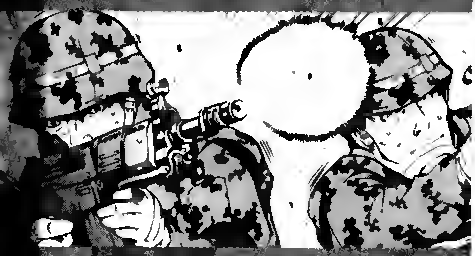

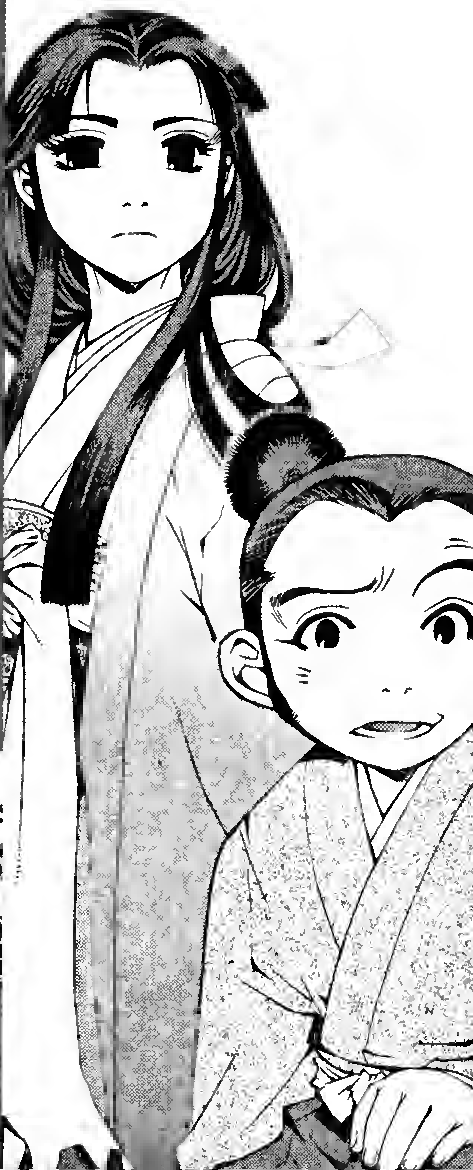

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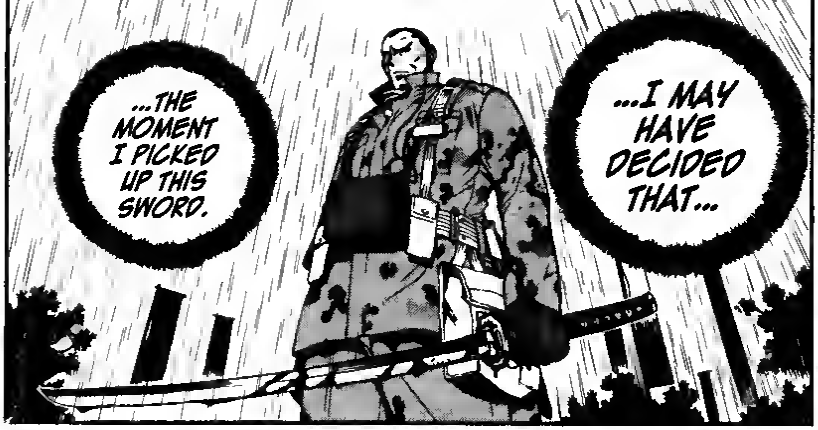
I KILLED HIM...
COLONEL MATOBA! COME IN, PLEASE!
MY LORD! WHERE IS HE ?!
FIND HIM!

SAMURAI COMMANDO
MISSION 1549

Episode 1
SCHEME FROM THE PAST

*NOBUNAGA ODA (1554–1582) MAJOR FEUDAL RULER WHO CONQUERED MOST OF JAPAN.


...THE MOMENT I PICKED UP THIS SWORD.
...I MAY HAVE DECIDED THAT...

MY LORD?!
LORD NOBU-NAGA!

Y-YOU!

YOU DARE MURDER THE SUCCESSOR TO THE ODA THRONE ?!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THE DEBT OF GRATITUDE YOU OWE ?!
ZAAA
KILL!!

CRACK
UM
BLE
RUMBLE
RRU
UWAAAAAAA
?!

YODA... FIRE.
CO-LONEL MATOBA!
WHAT?!
BUT SIR, YOUR EARS...!
SHOOT...
FIRE!!

BOOM

THIS IS THE SOUND OF MY VOICE! LEARN IT...
ATTENTION ALL SOLDIERS!
FWOOOOOOOOOOOO
FWOOOOO
...SO... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO...
...PEOPLE OF THE HEISEI*?
*THE HEISEI AGE, FROM 1989-PRESENT

2010 A.D.
(22nd year, Heisei period)
FWAP
Your Home or Business
Leave the remodeling to us
I TOLD YOU I AIN'T INTERESTED!
FWAP
WAIT... JUST HEAR ME OUT!
NO, JUST GET YOUR ASS OUTTA HERE!
SLAM
TIMES LIKE THESE, WHO'S GOT THE DOUGH TO BLOW IT ON SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT?!

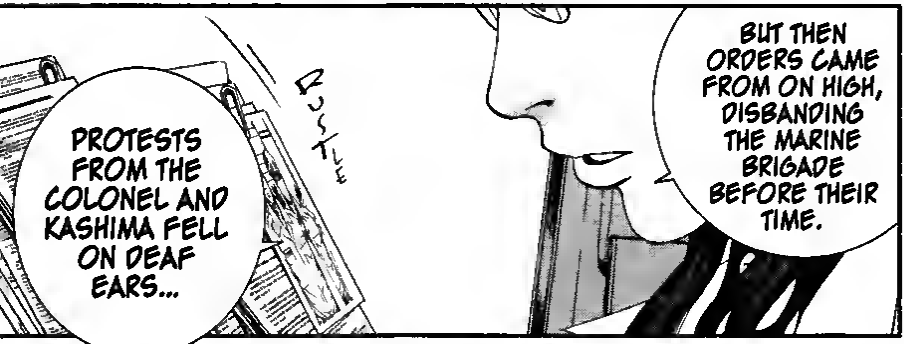
YUSUKE KASHIMA, 35 YEARS OLD. AFTER GRADUATING FROM THE NATIONAL DEFENSE ACADEMY ...

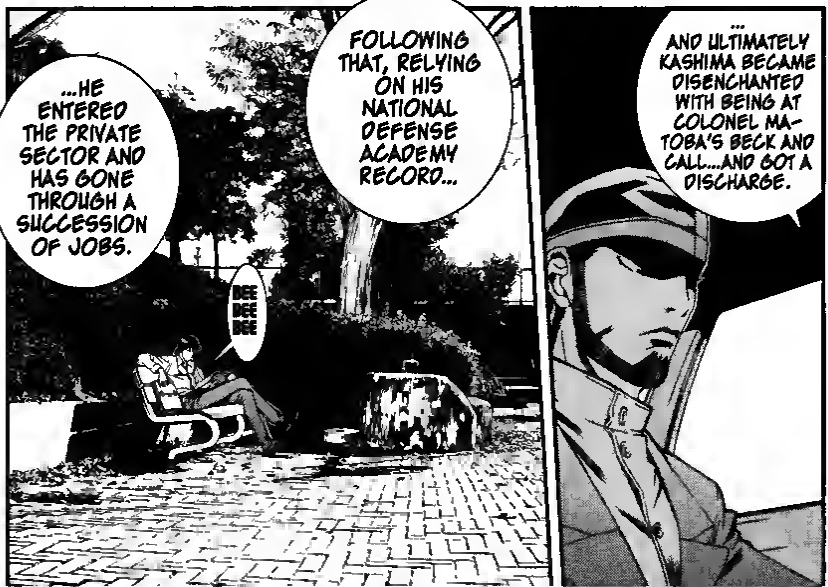
...HE ENTERED THE AIR-BORNE DIVISION OF THE SDF.

THAT'S WHERE HE WAS RECRUITED BY OUR "FRIEND" COLONEL MATOBA...

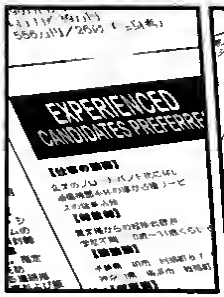
...TO JOIN THE SPECIAL MARINE BRIGADE, "F UNIT."

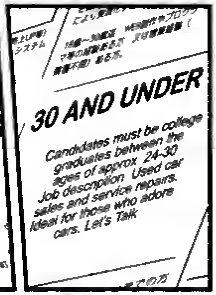
WHILE IN THE BRIGADE, KASHIMA CAME TO HAVE ENORMOUS RESPECT FOR THE COLONEL.
IN FACT, IT WOULDN'T BE OVERSTATING THE MATTER TO SAY THAT HE ALMOST HAD A KIND OF RELIGIOUS FAITH IN THE MAN.


BUT THEN ORDERS CAME FROM ON HIGH, DISBANDING THE MARINE BRIGADE BEFORE THEIR TIME.
RUSH
PROTESTS FROM THE COLONEL AND KASHIMA FELL ON DEAF EARS...


...AND ULTIMATELY KASHIMA BECAME DISENCHANTED WITH BEING AT COLONEL MATOBA'S BECK AND CALL...AND GOT A DISCHARGE.
FOLLOWING THAT, RELYING ON HIS NATIONAL DEFENSE ACADEMY RECORD...
...HE ENTERED THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND HAS GONE THROUGH A SUCCESSION OF JOBS.
DEE DEE DEE

ACCORDING TO OUR INVESTIGATIONS, HE'S GOT A DISMAL SALES RECORD...
...POOR RELATIONS WITH HIS SUPE-RIORS...
MR. MIURA(30)
JOB-CHANGING LIFE
CURRENTLY, HE'S A SALESMAN FOR A SMALL COMPANY.
BEE BEE BEE BEE BEE


EXPERIENCED CANDIDATES PREFERRED


30 AND UNDER
Candidates must be college graduates between the ages of approx. 24-30. Job description: Used car sales and service repairs. Ideal for those who adore cars. Let's Talk.

BUT BE THAT AS IT MAY ...
.....

...AND IS NOW CONSIDERING CHANGING JOBS AGAIN... WHICH WOULD BE THE 8TH TIME.

...WE DESPER-ATELY NEED HIM.
LET'S GO.
COOO'S RESTAURANT
HOT POT

YEAH ...?
PAT
I MAY NOT LOOK LIKE IT, BUT I'M A BUSY GUY.
SO WHAT BUSINESS DOES TECH R AND D HQ HAVE WITH A FORMER 2ND LIEUTENANT?
ALL RIGHT, THEN LET'S CUT THE SHIT.
YOU CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH ME, CAN YOU?
WE'VE COME TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT EMPLOYMENT.

SLURP
PLEASE, LOOK AT THESE.

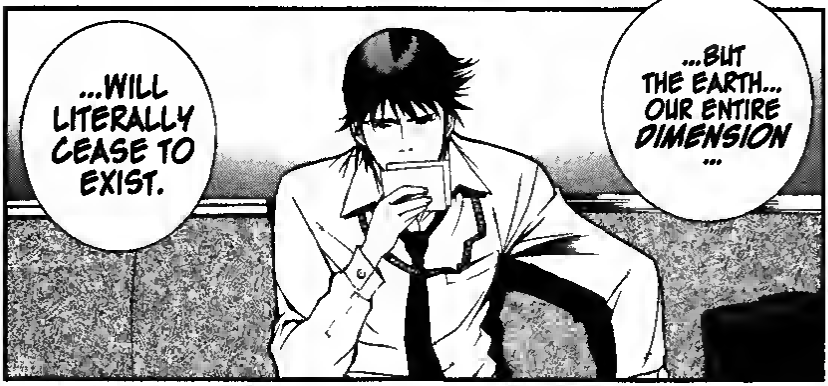
HM? A DOG CARCASS?
YOU TRYING TO MAKE ME LOSE MY LUNCH?
!
LOOK CLOSELY.
WHAT THE HELL? WHAT'S THIS BIT...?

...STUCK HIS HEAD IN THAT THING IN THE PHOTO.
IT APPEARS THE DOG...
THIS ONE IS NEXT.
FLIP
!
OKAY, I'LL BITE. WHAT IS THIS CRAP?

HERE'S OUR ANALYSIS. WE'VE SURVEYED THEM...
...OPTI-CALLY...
...WITH RADIO WAVES ...
...AND CAME UP WITH A TIME SERIES ANALYSIS GRAPH OF THE PHENOM-ENON.
WHOA... HOLD UP, HOLD UP.
MY MAJOR WAS HUMANI-TIES.
SO GIVE IT TO ME IN ENGLISH.
IT'S AN IMAGINARY NUMBER SPACE...
...OR MORE SIMPLY, HOLES, AS WE CALL THEM.
IMAGINARY NUMBER SPACE?
PERHAPS I CAN EXPLAIN IT BY SAYING IT'S SPACE OF A DIFFERENT NATURE THAN THAT OF OUR OWN DIMENSION.

ARE THE HOLES GETTING BIGGER?
...AT PRESENT, THESE "HOLES" ARE POPPING UP ALL OVER JAPAN. AND THEY'RE INCREASING...
...EXPONENTIALLY.
HOWEVER...
WE'VE REALLY JUST BEGUN TO MEASURE THE PHENOMENON OURSELVES, SO THERE'S STILL MUCH WE DON'T KNOW.
...WE BELIEVE OUR SPACE IS BEING *REPLACED*.
SPEAKING MORE PRECISELY...
YES, THAT TOO... *OUR* SPACE IS BEING ENCROACHED UPON BY THIS "OTHER" SPACE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
YES... AND IF THE EXPANSION CONTINUES AT THIS RATE, DOGS WON'T BE THE ONLY VICTIMS.
...BUT THE SPACE ITS HEAD WAS OCCUPYING GOT *REPLACED*?
SO YOU'RE SAYING THIS DOG'S HEAD DIDN'T *DISAPPEAR*...

AND NOT JUST IN JAPAN...
ULTIMATELY, THE "IMAGINARY NUMBER SPACE" WILL SWALLOW UP ALL OF OUR SPACE.


...WILL LITERALLY CEASE TO EXIST.
...BUT THE EARTH... OUR ENTIRE DIMENSION ...

HA HA HA HA HA!
HAHA HA...
HEH- HEH- HEH- HEH...
HEH- HEH...

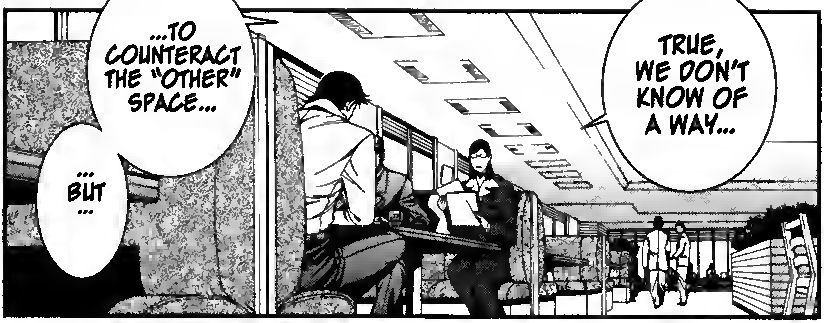
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
FINE BY ME!
HEE-HEE-HEE... THE WORLD WILL GO POOF?
HA HA
HA HA HA
IN FACT, IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO TO MAKE IT GO FASTER, LEMME KNOW!
SLAP
SLAP

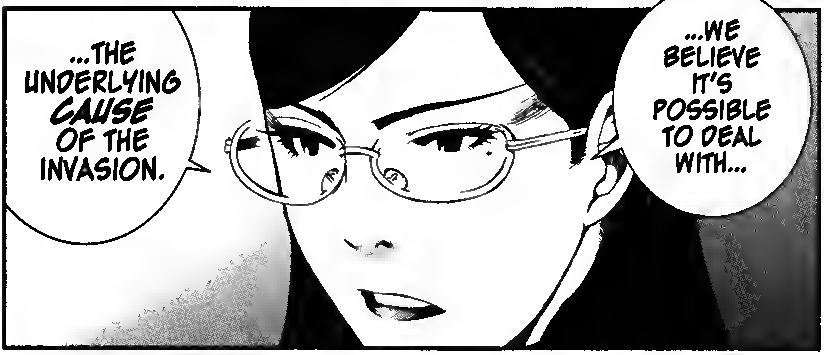
HEH-
HEH-
HEH...
.....
OKAY
...
...I GOT THREE BIG PROBLEMS WITH THIS WHOLE SCENARIO
...

...THEY'RE POPPING UP ALL OVER THE COUNTRY...AND LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THIS ONE CAMPED OUT NEXT TO MT. FUJI!
...WHY ISN'T EVERYONE TALKING ABOUT IT ALREADY? I MEAN, COME ON, YOU YOURSELF SAID...
FIRST, THIS "IMAGINARY SPACE" OR WHATEVER YOU WANNA CALL IT...
IF NOBODY'S NOTICED YET, THIS MUST BE A COUNTRY OF THE BLIND!
...SOCIETY WILL CRUMBLE.
IF THE TRUTH THAT THE WORLD WILL END GETS OUT BEFORE WE KNOW OF ANY COUNTER MEASURES THAT CAN BE TAKEN...
A NEWS BLACK-OUT ON THE SUBJECT HAS BEEN EN-ACTED.
PEOPLE WITH STRONG INTUITION WILL BEGIN TO SUSPECT THAT SOMETHING'S GOING ON.
BUT SOON, VERY SOON, IT'LL BE AS YOU SAY.

SLAPP
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY BEING WHAT IT IS THESE DAYS, "PHOTO EVIDENCE" IS AN ANACHRONISM.
HOW CAN YOU PROVE THESE PICS HAVEN'T BEEN DOCTORED?
HA!
PROBLEM NUMBER TWO, THEN.
HMPH.
...WE'LL TAKE YOU TO ONE OF THE HOLE LOCATIONS.
IF YOU WISH...
WHY DO I GOTTA BE THE EARTH'S SAVIOR?
PROBLEM NUMBER THREE. WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME?
NAH, THAT'S OKAY ...
TAK

THAT JAPAN'S BECOME ROTTEN TO THE CORE, SO I COULDN'T CARE LESS IF THE WHOLE COUNTRY JUST FELL OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH.
CHOMP
ALL THE RESEARCH YOU OBVIOUSLY DID ON ME, YOU PROBABLY KNOW WHAT I THINK.
BUT BEYOND THAT...
...WHO BELIEVES THAT TO STAND UP AND SAVE THE PLACE.
SO I GOTTA THINK YOU GUYS ARE NUTS...FOR ASKING A GUY...
...BUT YOUR WHOLE STORY HAS "HOLES" BIG ENOUGH TO DRIVE A TRUCK THROUGH!
BOTTOM LINE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR GAME IS...
SO WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU ASKIN' ME TO DO?
...YOU YOURSELF SAID YOU DON'T KNOW OF A QUICK FIX TO PLUG THESE HOLES, RIGHT?
CLATTER


TRUE, WE DON'T KNOW OF A WAY...
...TO COUNTERACT THE "OTHER" SPACE...
...BUT...


...WE BELIEVE IT'S POSSIBLE TO DEAL WITH...
...THE UNDERLYING CAUSE OF THE INVASION.

SIX YEARS AGO?
WHAT HAPPENED SIX YEARS AGO?

HAH? THE CAUSE?

...IN JUNE OF 2004.
THE HOLES FIRST BEGAN APPEARING...

IN JUNE ...
DON'T YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED SIX YEARS AGO?
!
.....
HAH ?
YOU MEAN... MATOBA-SAN?

THAT'S RIGHT. THAT MONTH, COLONEL TAKESHI MATOBA WAS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY.
WHAT CONNECTION DOES MATOBA-SAN HAVE WITH YOUR "SPACE INVASION ?"
DID HE DO SOMETHING BEFORE HE DIED? ANSWER ME!
SHAMAN
TAKESHI MATOBA ISN'T DEAD.
AND THIS PHENOM-ENON ...
...IS AN ATTACK FROM THE PAST.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ...?
.....
I HAVE PROOF.
LIVING PROOF, SITTING RIGHT NEXT TO ME.
RUSTLE
I AM ...

...A VASSAL OF THE SAITO CLAN.
SWISH
.....
MY NAME IS SHICHIBE IINUMA...
FWU
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME...
.....

...CURRENT EXIS-TENCE.
I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT YOU NEED TO SEE...TO PROVE THE PRECARIOUS STATE OF OUR...
RATTLE
LET'S GO...
...MY OFFER OF EMPLOY-MENT?
PERHAPS THEN YOU'LL BE WILLING TO CONSIDER...
MATOBA-SAN...
.....

...WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO YOU?

...MATOBA-SAN...

June, 1549
The former Oda residence

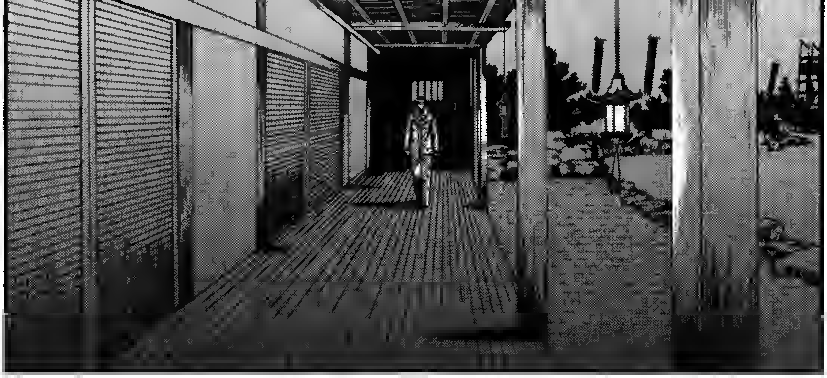
SWISH
80% OF THE ODA CLAN RETAINERS HAVE SURRENDERED TO US.
I'VE COME TO REPORT THE RESULTS OF TODAY'S ENGAGEMENT.
ENTER.
EXCUSE ME, SIR.
I SEE.
...ONLY KNOW NIM AS AN UNDISCIPLINED LORD WHO WAS CUT DOWN IN HIS YOUTH.
COMING FROM THE FUTURE, WE KNOW HOW IMPORTANT HE WAS TO JAPAN... BUT THE PEOPLE IN THIS AGE OF CIVIL WARS...
MATOBA-SAN, YOU STRUCK DOWN NOBUNAGA...
...BEFORE HE HAD ACCOMPLISHED ANYTHING.

WE LIVE IN AN AGE WHERE SERVANTS ARE EAGER TO RISE AGAINST THEIR MASTERS.
THE ODA BLOODLINE HAS BEEN ALL BUT WIPED OUT IN TODAY'S BATTLE.
...WITHOUT PUTTING UP MUCH OF A FIGHT.
MAYBE THAT'S WHY MOST OF THE VASSALS OF ODA JOINED US...
...WE STILL HAVE ENOUGH TO BRING DOWN ANOTHER 10 OR 20 CASTLES.
YES, SIR... EVEN IF WE LIBERALLY USE THE SUPPLIES WE BROUGHT ALONG WITH US...
...BY WIPING OUT THE REMAINING DIE-HARD ODA LOYALISTS.
MMM... NOW WOULD BE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR A DISPLAY OF POWER WITHIN OWARI*...

*CURRENTLY, THE WESTERN HALF OF AICHI PREFECTURE

CAN THEY BUILD IT?
WHAT'S THE STATUS OF MY PROJECT?
NO, SIR!
DON'T PRESUME THAT OUR BATTLE STRENGTH IS LIMITED.
...YES, THEY CAN BUILD IT.
ACCORDING TO THE ARCHITECTS, IT'LL TAKE A LITTLE TIME, BUT...
MAKE THEM GET IT DONE, AND SOON.
I DON'T CARE.
...AND THE PARTS...WILL REQUIRE CANNI-BALIZING OUR OWN EQUIPMENT ...
HOWEVER, PROCURING THE MATERIALS FOR THE MACHINERY ...

...MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, WILL DECIDE OUR FATE.
FOR THAT ...



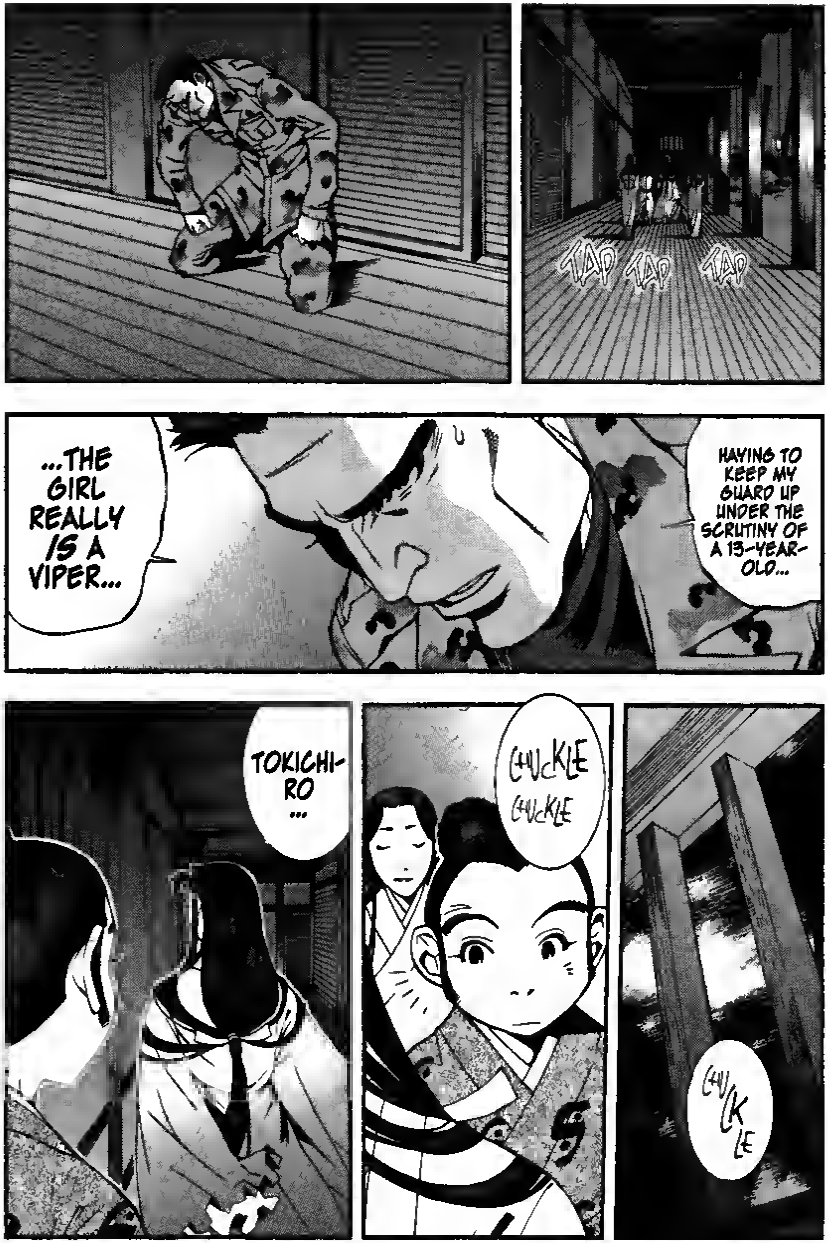
SH
SH
TAP
TAP

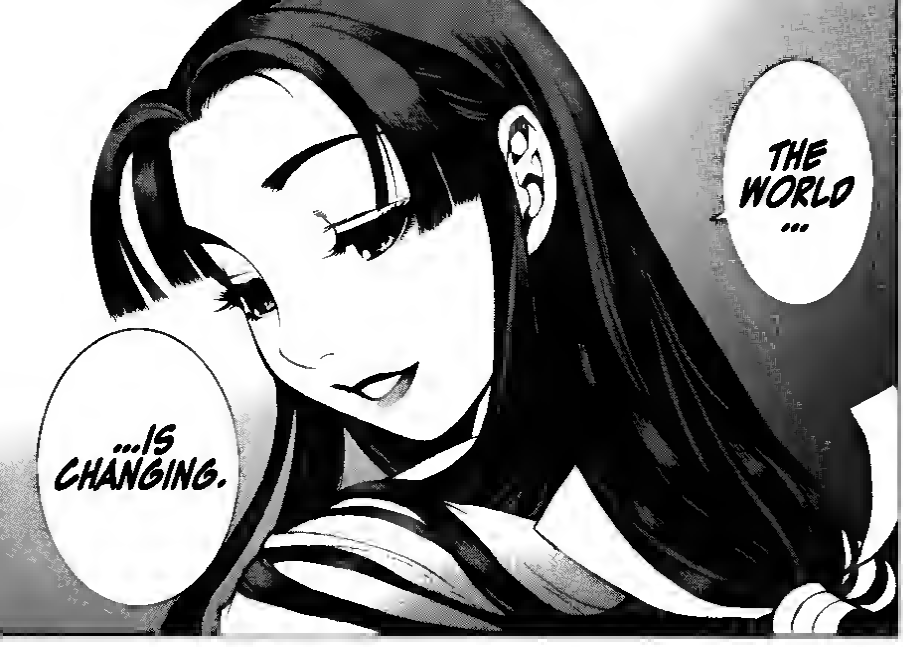
TAP
TAP

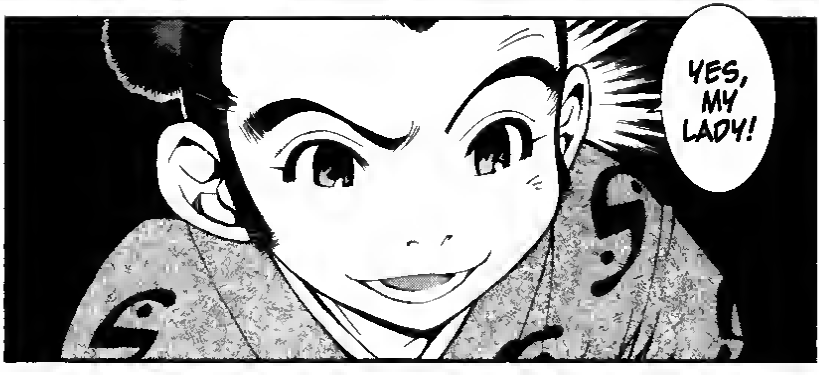
THE MOON SHINING THROUGH THE MIST IS TRULY BEAUTIFUL TONIGHT.
MR. YODA ...
YES...
...LADY KICHO.

EVEN IF BEAUTIFUL THINGS ARE COVERED BY MIST...
...THEIR ATTRACTIONS CANNOT BE CONCEALED.
THE HUMAN HEART IS THE SAME...COLONEL MATOBA'S HEART, TOO, IS ENSHROUDED BY MIST...
...BUT WHAT IT'S HIDING IS BEGINNING TO BECOME CLEAR.
OR PERHAPS IT'S JUST MY IMAGI-NATION?
.....

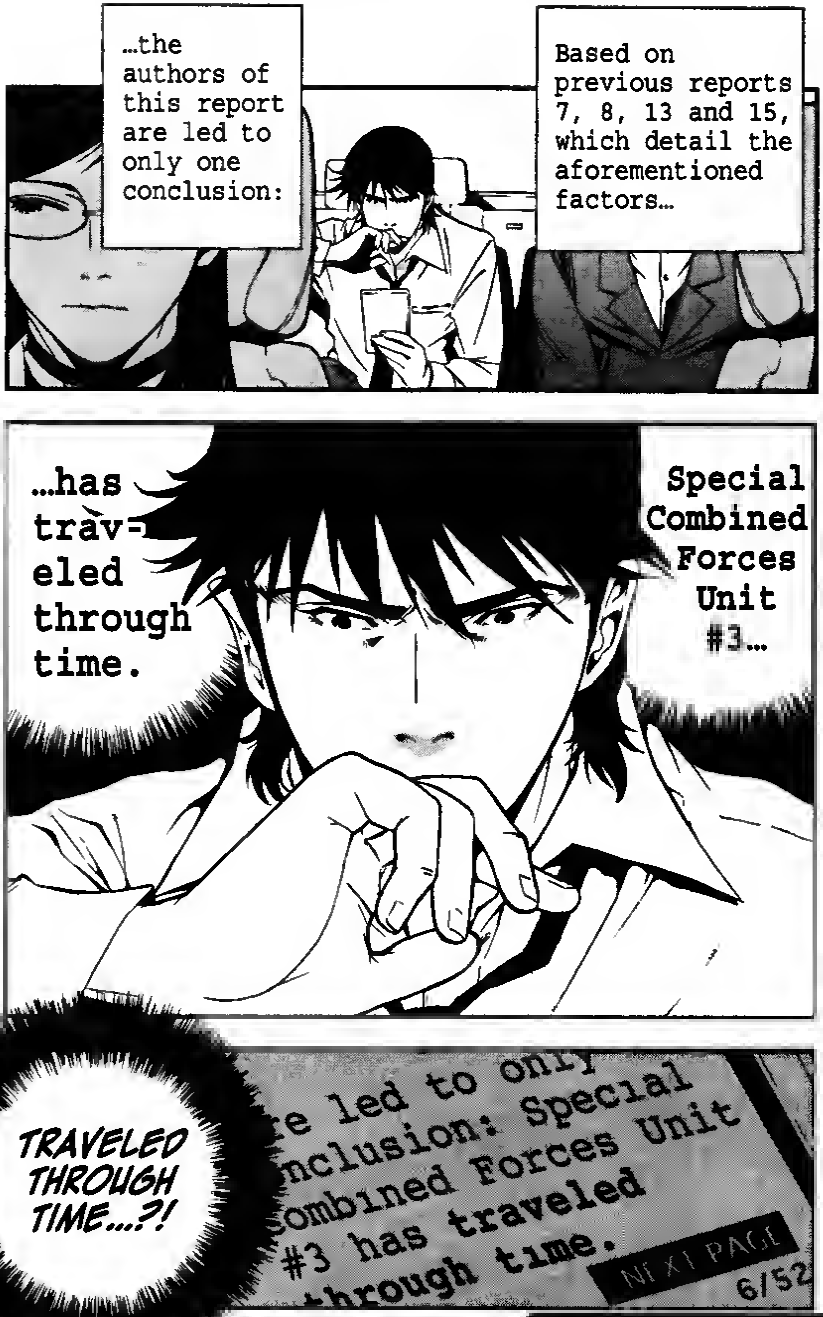
WELL, MR. YODA?
UH.....
ZAA ZAA
TAP


TAP TAP TAP
HAVING TO KEEP MY GUARD UP UNDER THE SCRUTINY OF A 13-YEAR-OLD...
...THE GIRL REALLY IS A VIPER...
TOKICHI-RO ...
CHUCKLE CHUCKLE
CHUCKLE


THE WORLD ...
...IS CHANGING.


YES, MY LADY!

"17th report concerning the diseppearance of Speciel Combined Forces Unit number three"
It is the purpose of this report to discern the true nature of the disappearance of "Special Combined Forces Unit Number 3" on June 26, 2004.
...and the phenomenon believed to be associated with it.
unknow
SCFU-3
sappearance
f the entir
nit. Being
planned.
Military u
ttempted a
udden shuto
egarding th
ccident dev
speed count


…the authors of this report are led to only one conclusion:
Based on previous reports 7, 8, 13 and 15, which detail the aforementioned factors…
…has traveled through time.
Special Combined Forces Unit #3…
TRAVELED THROUGH TIME…?!
e led to only
nclusion: Special
ombined Forces Unit
#3 has traveled
through time.
NEXT PAGE
6/52

SAMURAI
COMMANDO
MISSION 1549

RUMBLE
RRUM
MBLE
SAMURAI COMMANDO
MISSION 1549
Episode 2
"AMBITION AND PURPOSE AND..."
RATTLE
TWEET TWEET
RATTLE
KA
CHUNK
RRUUM
MBLE

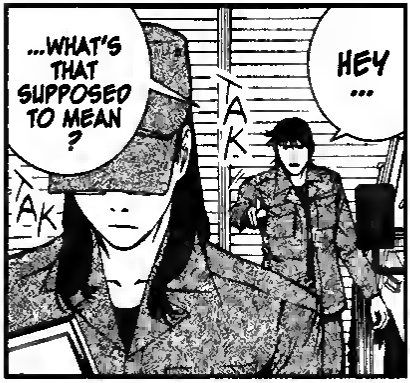
I'M GLAD ...
...TO SEE THAT YOU'VE CHANGED YOUR MIND.
.....
TUG
ACTU-ALLY ...
...THERE WAS NO OPTION WHERE YOU WOULDN'T GO.

EVEN BEFORE, COLONEL MATOBA WAS THE SELF-DEFENSE FORCES' ...
...MOST TALENTED STRATEGIST. SO WE NEEDED SOMEONE WHO COULD, ESSENTIALLY, "READ HIS THOUGHTS ..."
...AND YOU, AS HIS FORMER "STAR" DISCIPLE, FIT THE BILL.
LET'S GET ONE THING STRAIGHT. I'M GOING FOR MY OWN PURPOSES.
NOT TO SAVE THE FRICKIN' EARTH...
...AND NOT FOR YOU.
I'M GOING TO MEET MATOBA-SAN.
THE MAN I KNEW...
...WOULD NEVER HAVE STOOPED TO CHEAP TERRORIST TACTICS.

I WANNA KNOW HIS REA-SONS.
NO, SCRATCH THAT.
I NEED TO FIND OUT IF TAKESHI MATOBA ...
RUSTLE
...REALLY IS DOING WHAT YOU CLAIM HE IS. AND THAT'S THE ONLY REASON...
...I'M GOING ON YOUR FIELD TRIP THROUGH TIME.
AND THEN WHAT?
IF YOU FIND THAT EVERYTHING I'VE SAID IS TRUE, THEN WHAT WILL YOU DO?

IF COLONEL MATOBA ASKS FOR YOUR HELP...
...WILL YOU RUN BACK TO HIS SIDE?
SHUT UP.
YOU MAY BE AN EXPERT ON BOTH OF US... BUT DON'T TALK LIKE YOU KNOW US.
LIKE I SAID, TAKESHI MATOBA'S NOT THE PERVERSE "EVIL GENIUS" YOU MAKE HIM OUT TO BE.
OH, THERE'S NO MISTAKE. THE PERSON WHO'S ATTACKING US FROM THE PAST...
...IS YOUR FORMER MENTOR.
WHACK
RATTLE
CRACK
RATTLE

HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE OF THAT?
BECAUSE ...
...I'M RESPON-SIBLE FOR IT.

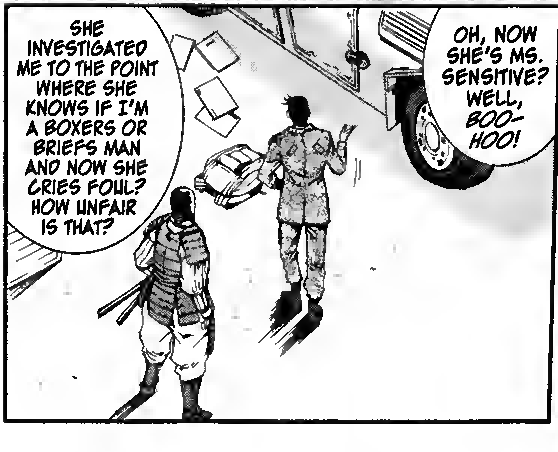

...WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
HEY...
TAK
TAK
TAK

TAK

...MISS REI, TOO, HAS SOME THINGS IN HER'S SHE IS NOT READY TO SPEAK OF.

JUST AS THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN YOUR PAST YOU WOULD RATHER NOT HAVE BROUGHT TO LIGHT...

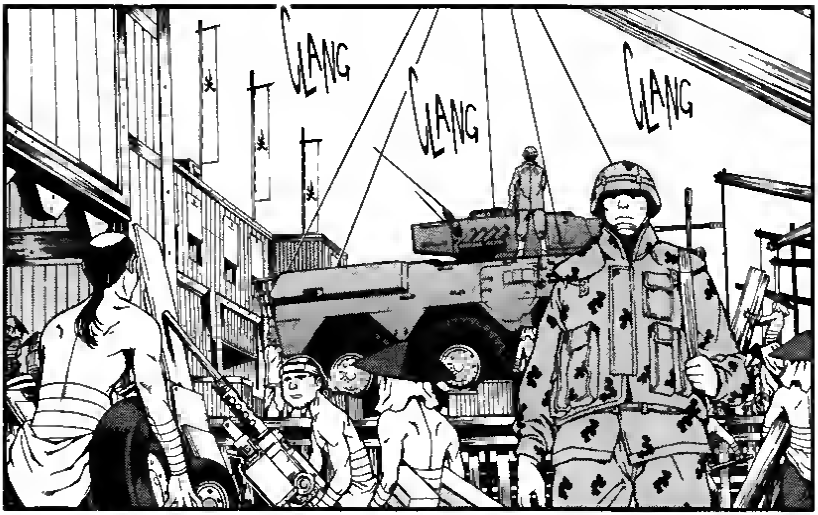
CHAK
CHAK
CHAK

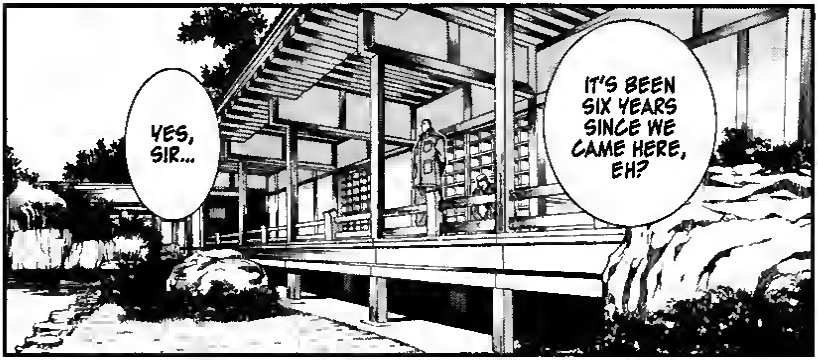

SHE INVESTIGATED ME TO THE POINT WHERE SHE KNOWS IF I'M A BOXERS OR BRIEFS MAN AND NOW SHE CRIES FOUL? HOW UNFAIR IS THAT?
OH, NOW SHE'S MS. SENSITIVE? WELL, BOO-HOO!

YEAH, WELL, WHAT ELSE ARE YOU GONNA SAY? YOU'RE A SAMURAI.
MYSELF, I FIND REMAINING SILENT AND ENDURING UNTIL FAVORABLE OPPORTUNITY ARISES TO BE A MUCH BETTER PLAN.
I'M SURE YOU WERE SELECTED FOR THIS TASK BASED ON MORE THAN YOUR PENCHANT FOR HOWLING WHEN THINGS AREN'T TO YOUR LIKING.
I SAY IT NOT AS A SAMURAI ...
... BUT AS A MAN.
.....
AND WHAT IS IT YOU GOTTA ENDURE? YOU GET TO GO BACK HOME.
PIECE OF CAKE!
A12a1A
7 62 mm M80 standard shell
Lot AQ-L206
05-02
7 62 MM M80 STANDARD SHELLS

WHAT HAPPENED ...?
WHAT HAPPENED AFTER I LEFT YOUR COMMAND ...
...MATOBA-SAN?

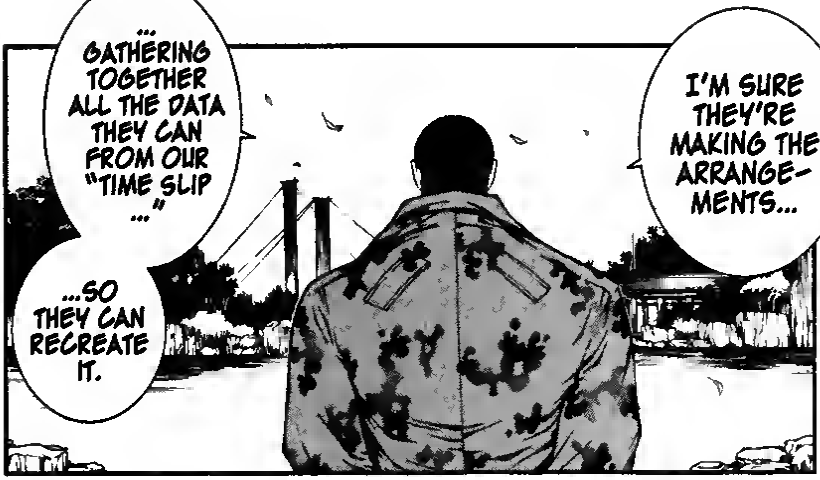
September 1549, Rasidantial Castle of the Matoba/Saito Army
CREAK
CREAK
CREAK
CREAK
CREAK
CREAK
WHIR
WHIR
WHIR
WHIR
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE


CLANG
CLANG
CLANG


YES, SIR...
IT'S BEEN SIX YEARS SINCE WE CAME HERE, EH?

BEAUTIFUL, ISN'T IT?
ZAA

THE AIR...
...THE SCENERY...
...THE PEOPLE...
I EXPECT THEY'LL BE COMING SOON.
YES, SIR.
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THIS AGE THAT DOES THAT TO PEOPLE.
I DON'T MIND.
I...I ONLY MEANT...
...YOU SPEAK AS IF YOU WERE BORN HERE, YOOA.
"FROM HEISEI..."
YOU MEAN, FROM HEISEI?


I'M SURE THEY'RE MAKING THE ARRANGE-MENTS...
...GATHERING TOGETHER ALL THE DATA THEY CAN FROM OUR "TIME SLIP ..."
...SO THEY CAN RECREATE IT.

ARE YOU THAT CERTAIN THEY'LL COME?
OH, THEY'LL COME...

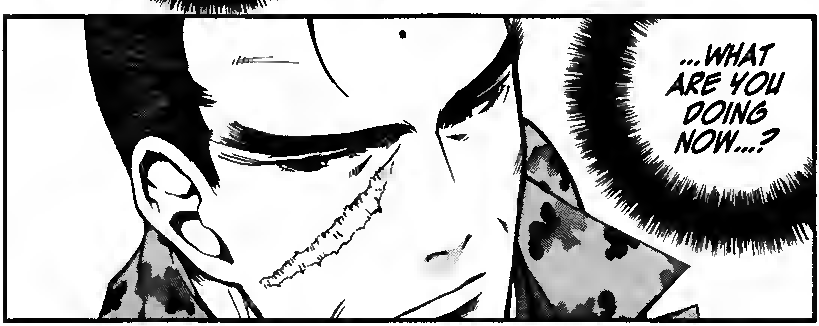
BUT WHAT IF THEY STOP US BEFORE WE CAME HERE...?
WE'RE DOING EXACTLY AS WE LIKE IN THIS AGE.
I'M SURE THEY'RE FEELING RE-PERCUSSIONS ON THE "OTHER END."

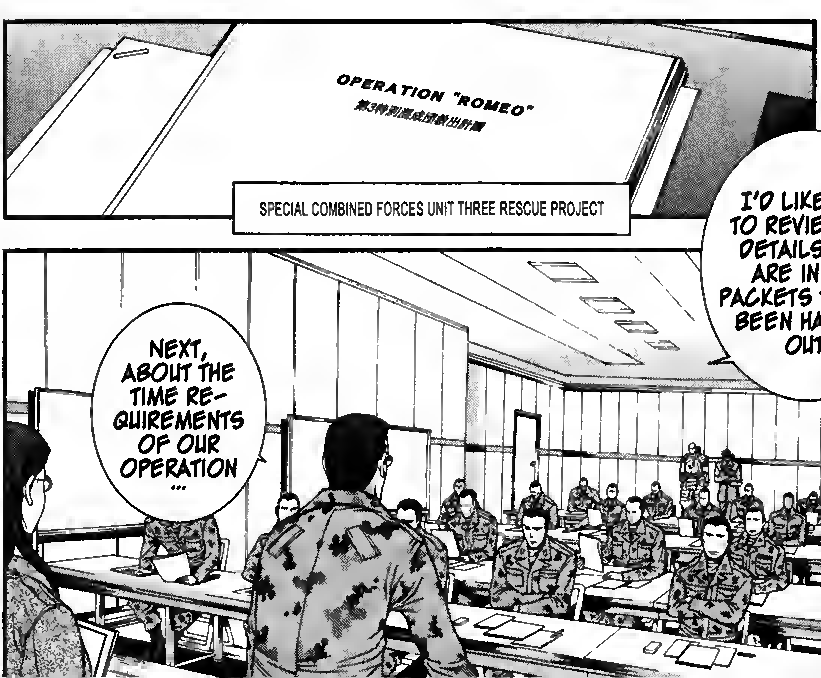
IMPOSSIBLE.
AH, YOU MEAH GO BACK IN TIME TO BEFORE WE ARRIVED AHD NIP OUR ACTIONS IN THE BUD?
...WE WOULD'VE BEEN SURROUNDED BY THEIR ARMY AHD BROUGHT BACK TO 2004.
IF THEY HAD THE TECHNOLOGY TO DO THAT, THE INSTANT WE ARRIVED IN THIS AGE...
.....
...WE HAVE TO ENGAGE IN BATTLE WITH HEISEI SOLDIERS.
FOR WHATEVER HAPPENS, FOR OUR PLANS TO COME TO FRUITION ...
ANYWAY, MAKE THEM HURRY TO COMPLETE ANMO CASTLE.
CLANG
CLANG

IS THERE SOME-THING TROUBLING YOU?
NO, SIR...
...I'VE ALREADY DECIDED TO BET EVERYTHING ON YOU.
WHEREVER YOU GO, I'LL FOLLOW.
.....
CHUCKLE
WHAT'S WRONG?
NOTHING, SORRY...
...IT'S JUST THAT I USED TO KNOW ANOTHER MAN WHO SPOKE THOSE SAME WORDS TO ME.
YOU REMINDED ME OF HIM JUST NOW.

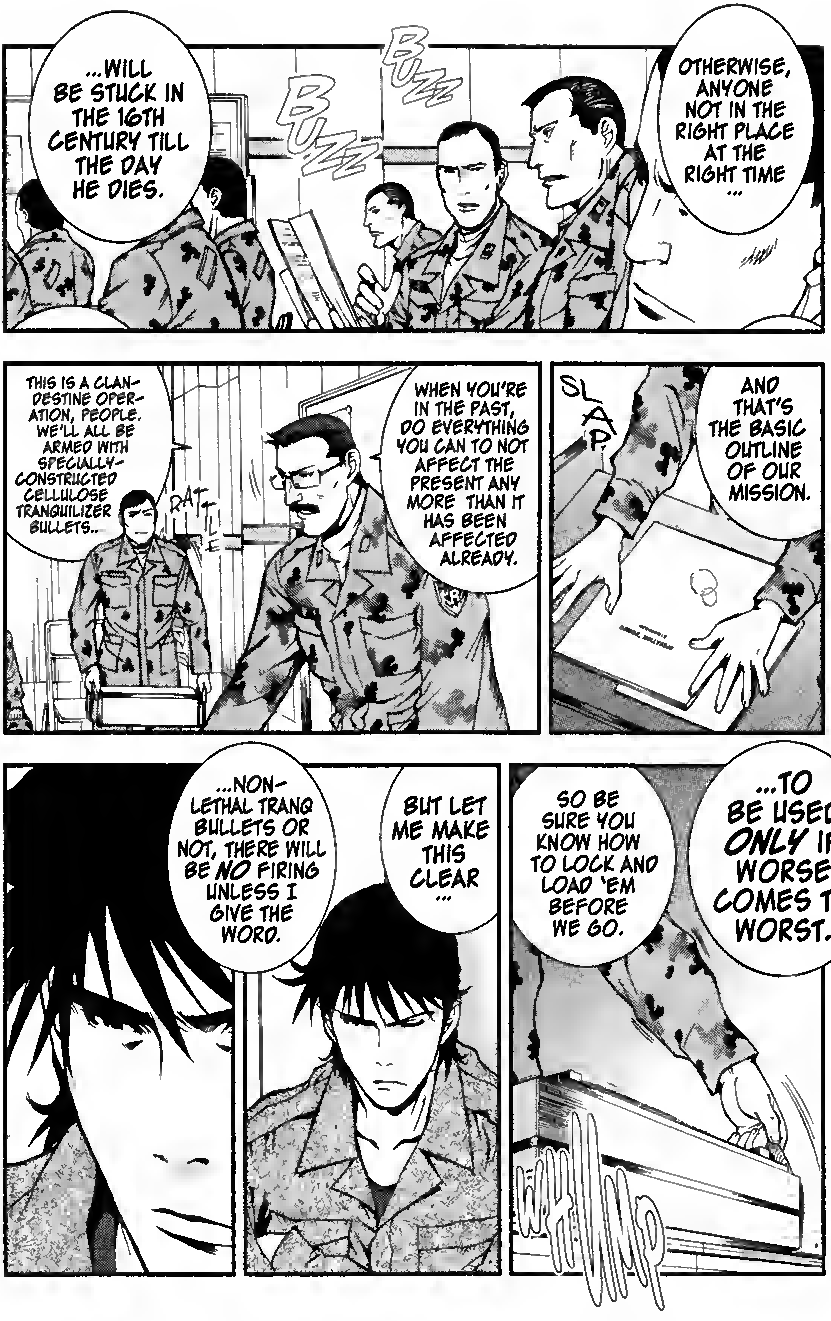
WAS HE A MEMBER OF F UNIT...?
YES.....
BUT THE THING IS, YODA...
...PEOPLE CHANGE.
THE TAKESHI MATOBA YOU BELIEVE IN TODAY...
...MAY BE GONE TOMORROW.
IF THAT TIME COMES, I WILL REMAIN WITH YOU...
PERHAPS THAT, TOO...
...WOULD HAVE BEEN A GOOD WAY TO LIVE.
...UNTIL I'M FORCED TO BRAND MYSELF A FOOL.

KASHIMA...


...WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW...?


OPERATION "ROMEO"
第3特殊連成部隊出所圖
SPECIAL COMBINED FORCES UNIT THREE RESCUE PROJECT
I'D LIKE YOU TO REVIEW THE DETAILS THAT ARE IN THE PACKETS THAT'VE BEEN HANDED OUT.
NEXT, ABOUT THE TIME REQUIREMENTS OF OUR OPERATION ...

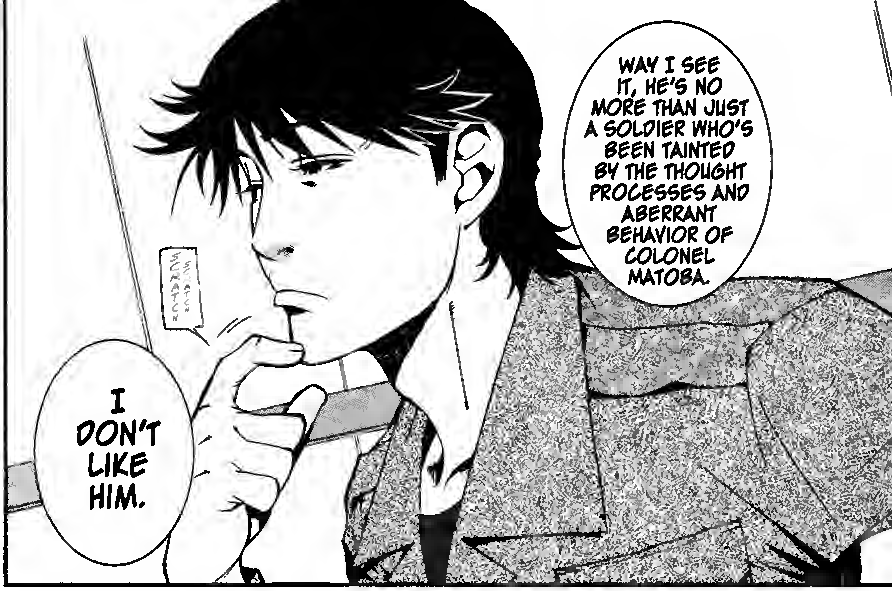
WE HAVE EXACTLY 72 HOURS TO GET IN AND GET OUT.
THE WAY IT WORKS IS AN EQUIVALENT AMOUNT OF "MODERN SPACE..."
SHICK
...AND "PAST SPACE" WILL BE EXCHANGED.
FROM THE PREVIOUS INCIDENT, WE'VE FOUND THAT AFTER 72 HOURS ...
TAK
...THE TWO DISPLACED SPACES... SWITCH BACK TO THEIR PROPER JUNCTURES IN TIME.
SO, TO ENSURE THAT WE CAN RETURN HOME...
...THE STRICT 72-HOUR TIME LIMIT IS IMPOSED ...
...THE SAME AMOUNT OF TIME UNIT 3 HAD.

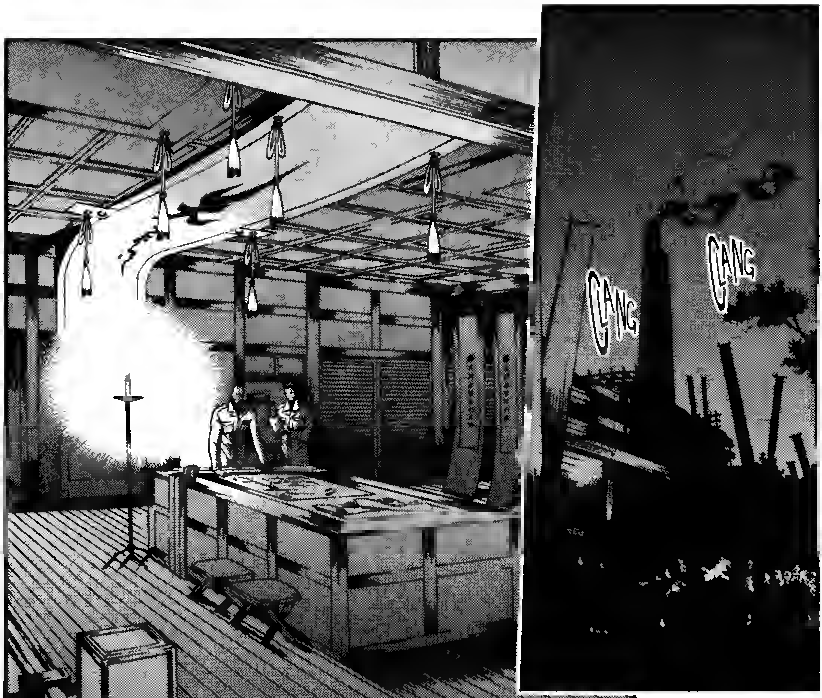

...WILL BE STUCK IN THE 16TH CENTURY TILL THE DAY HE DIES.
BUZZ
BUZZ
OTHERWISE, ANYONE NOT IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME ...
THIS IS A CLANDESTINE OPERATION, PEOPLE. WE'LL ALL BE ARMED WITH SPECIALLY-CONSTRUCTED CELLULOSE TRANQUILIZER BULLETS..
RAT-TLE
WHEN YOU'RE IN THE PAST, DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN TO NOT AFFECT THE PRESENT ANY MORE THAN IT HAS BEEN AFFECTED ALREADY.
SLAP
AND THAT'S THE BASIC OUTLINE OF OUR MISSION.
...NON-LETHAL TRANQ BULLETS OR NOT, THERE WILL BE NO FIRING UNLESS I GIVE THE WORD.
BUT LET ME MAKE THIS CLEAR ...
SO BE SURE YOU KNOW HOW TO LOCK AND LOAD 'EM BEFORE WE GO.
...TO BE USED ONLY IF WORSE COMES TO WORST.
WRAP

...OF THE SELF-DEFENSE FORCES THAT BECAME STRANDED IN THE PAST.
OUR ONLY AIM...IS TO SECURE THE MEMBERS ...
...YOU WILL DO YOUR UTMOST TO AVOID THEM AND CONCEAL YOUR PRESENCE.
IF IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT YOU'LL ENCOUNTER ANY "LOCALS ..."
I KNOW I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU THIS MISSION IS DESIGNATED AS ULTRA-TOP SECRET.
THE CODENAME FOR OUR UNIT IS ROMEO.
IF WE FAIL, WE WON'T HAVE A PLACE TO GO HOME TO. SO I'M COUNTING ON ALL OF YOU...
...IS RIDING ON THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THIS OPERATION.
...TO ACT COOL, CALM AND COLLECTED, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.
ANY QUESTIONS?
MELODRAMATIC AS IT SOUNDS, THE FATE OF OUR WORLD ...

NOW I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE OUR OBSERVER FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR.
FORMER 2ND LIEUTENANT YUSUKE KASHIMA WILL BE ACCOMPANYING US ON THE MISSION.
MR. KASHIMA, GOOD TO BE WORKING WITH YOU. I EXPECT I'LL BE ASKING YOUR ADVICE... ABOUT THE BEST MEANS...
...TO ATTAIN OUR GOAL.
VERY WELL...WE ASSEMBLE AT 23:10.
DISMISSED!
TAAA
BUN
BUN

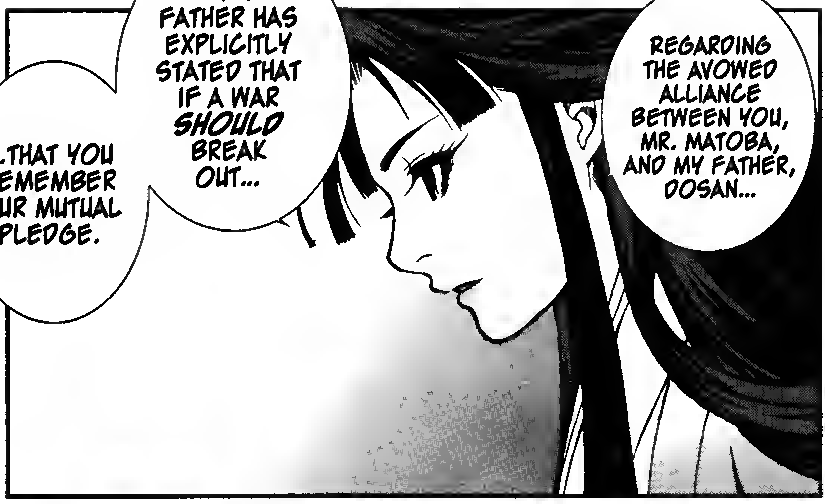
...THAT KASHIMA GUY IS GOING TO BE OKAY?
ARE YOU SURE...
SO HE USED TO BE A MEMBER OF F UNIT, HUH?
.....
...GREEN LIGHTED HIM, TOO. ASIDE FROM THAT...WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY OTHER CHOICE.
YES...HE'S NOT LACKING IN APTITUDE, THAT'S FOR SURE. AND THE BRASS HAVE...

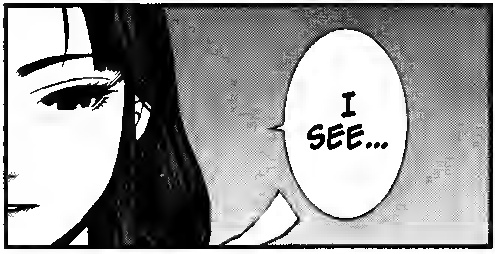

WAY I SEE IT, HE'S NO MORE THAN JUST A SOLDIER WHO'S BEEN TAINTED BY THE THOUGHT PROCESSES AND ABERRANT BEHAVIOR OF COLONEL MATOBA.
I DON'T LIKE HIM.

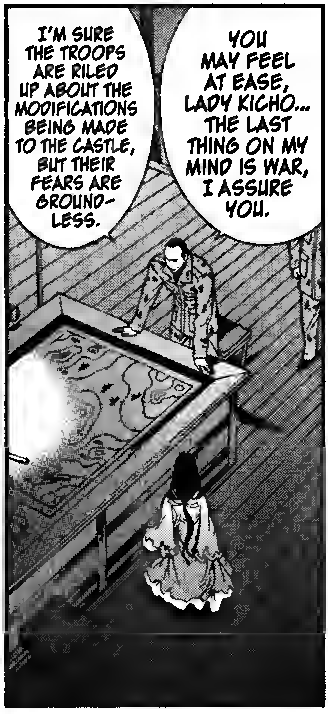

CLANG
CLANG

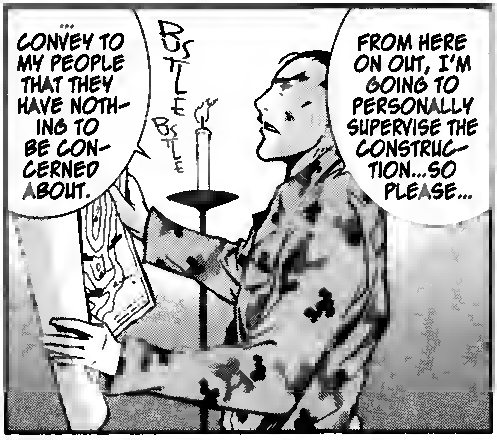
CRACKLE
NOK
.....
AH, LADY KICHO ...
... WHAT'S THE MATTER?

...FEARFUL TO THE POINT OF SHAMEFULNESS THAT SOMETHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN SOON.
THE RETAINERS IN THE CASTLE ARE ALL AFLUTTER ...
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
SLIDE
...AND MAYHAP STILL THEIR FEARS.
SO I HAVE COME TO VISIT YOU ON THEIR BEHALF, THAT I MAY ASCERTAIN THE TRUTH OF THE RUMORS...
SPUTTER
THERE IS ONE OTHER MATTER ...
.....
I SEE ...I'M SORRY YOU'VE BEEN INCONVENIENCED.


REGARDING THE AVOWED ALLIANCE BETWEEN YOU, MR. MATOBA, AND MY FATHER, OOSAN...
...MY FATHER HAS EXPLICITLY STATED THAT IF A WAR SHOULD BREAK OUT...
...THAT YOU REMEMBER OUR MUTUAL PLEDGE.


I SEE...

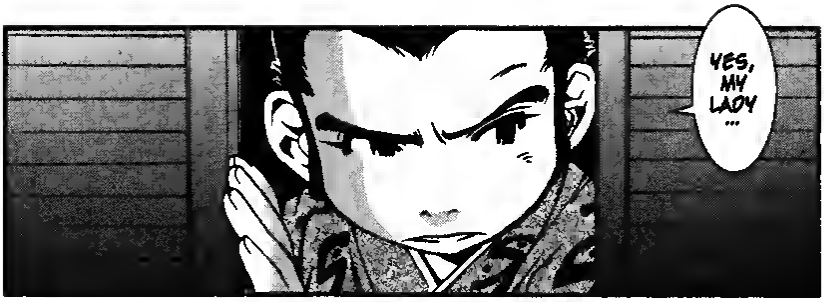

YOU MAY FEEL AT EASE, LADY KICHO... THE LAST THING ON MY MIND IS WAR, I ASSURE YOU.
I'M SURE THE TROOPS ARE RILED UP ABOUT THE MODIFICATIONS BEING MADE TO THE CASTLE, BUT THEIR FEARS ARE GROUNDLESS.


FROM HERE ON OUT, I'M GOING TO PERSONALLY SUPERVISE THE CONSTRUCTION...SO PLEASE...
...CONVEY TO MY PEOPLE THAT THEY HAVE NOTHING TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT.
BUSTLE BUSTLE

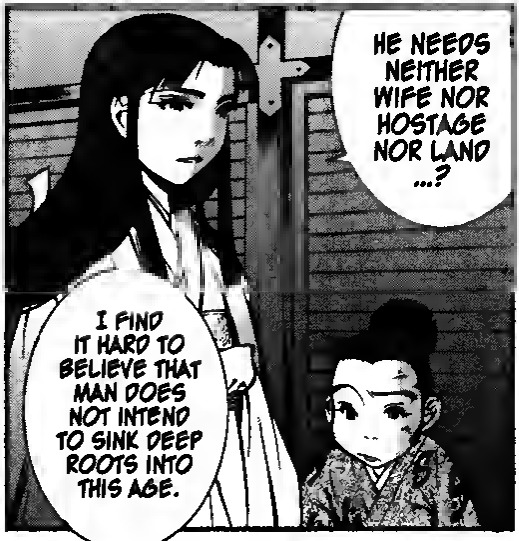
LADY KICHO, BELIEVE ME...
...I WOULD NEVER LET YOU OR ANY OF YOUR VASSALS...
...COME TO HARM.
MAY I SPEAK OF ONE MORE THING?
MY FATHER HAS SAID THAT MINO* MAY BE GIVEN TO YOU IN GOOD TIME.

*CURRENT GIFU PREFECTURE

...MINO FOR YOURSELF, MY LADY.
YOU MAY KEEP ...
HE SAID HE DOESN'T NEED MINO...
DID YOU HEAR THAT, MONKEY ?
CHA KK
EXCUSE ME.
TAP
TAP


YES, MY LADY ...

WHEN MY FATHER OFFERED ME AS A BRIDE, HE ANSWERED THAT HE DIDN'T NEED ME.
WHEN MY FATHER PROPOSED HE KEEP ME AS A HOSTAGE THEN, HE ANSWERED HE DIDN'T NEED ME FOR THAT EITHER.


HE NEEDS NEITHER WIFE NOR HOSTAGE NOR LAND ...?
I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT MAN DOES NOT INTEND TO SINK DEEP ROOTS INTO THIS AGE.

NOW, HE GRUDGINGLY PERMITS ME TO REMAIN HERE...AS NO MORE THAN A REMINDER ...
...OF THEIR ALLI-ANCE.

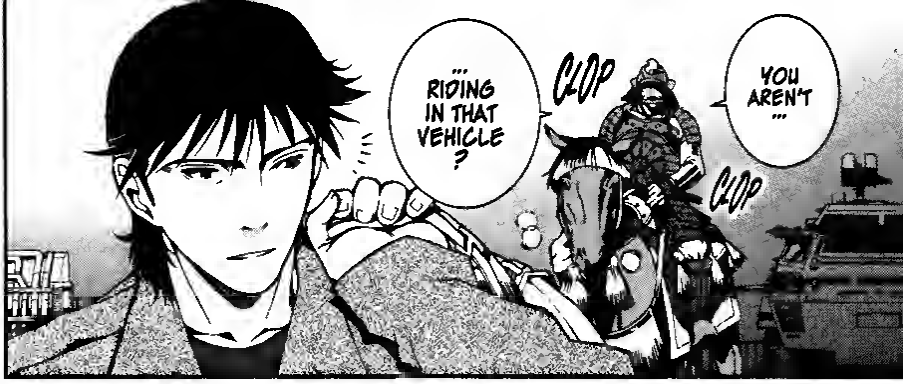
MY LADY...
MONKEY... KEEP A SHARP EYE ON HIS SOLDIERS.
HIS SOLDIERS?
YES, NOT HIM, BUT THE SOLDIERS.
AND BY ALL MEANS, DO NOT LET YOURSELF BE DETECTED.
AT ONCE, MY LADY.
WHAT DO YOU SEEK TO ACHIEVE, MATOBA...?
WHATEVER THE ANSWER, I HAVE CERTAINLY BEEN BORN INTO INTERESTING TIMES.
I MUST REMEMBER TO THANK MY FATHER FOR THAT.

RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS THIS...?
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
...A PLASMA SHIELD GENER-ATOR.
IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE...

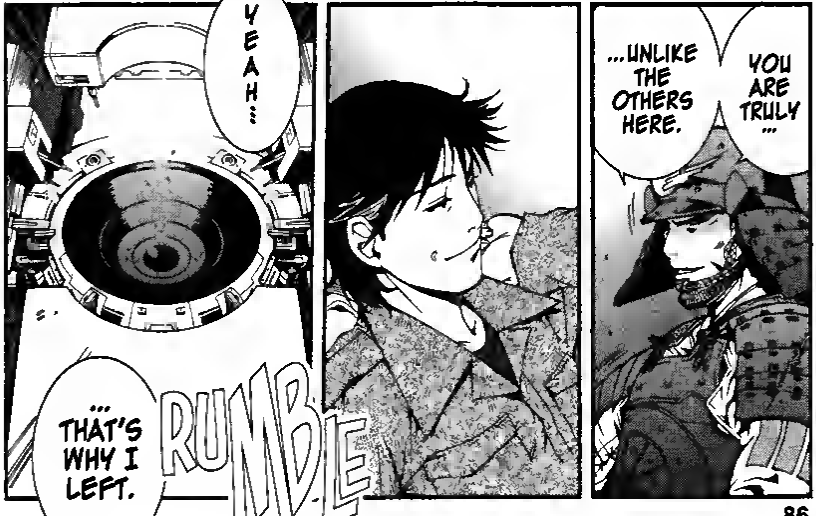
YOU SEE, CYCLICAL ELECTRO-MAGNETIC WAVES FROM THE SUN...
...CAN SERIOUSLY AFFECT PRECISION ELECTRONIC INSTRU-MENTS.
...EMANATE FROM THE SUN ...AND FORM A SHIELD THAT WOULD PROTECT ELECTRONIC DEVICES.
PUT SIMPLY, IT WAS MEANT TO CUT OFF THE POWERFUL ELECTRO-MAGNETIC WAVES THAT PERIODI-CALLY...
PLASMA?
A BURST OF SOLAR FLARES FROM THE SUN COULD TURN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION HERE ON EARTH FROM BAD TO WORSE.
OF COURSE, MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AND EQUIPMENT ARE INCLUDED IN THE "AT RISK" CATEGORY.
WHRRRRR
WHRRRRR
SO YOU BUILT A KIND OF BARRIER HERE THAT WOULD NEGATE THE PLASMA?
WHRRRRR
PROPERLY SPEAKING, WE *TRIED* TO BUILD A BARRIER.
I'M SURE YOU OF ALL PEOPLE CAN UNDERSTAND THE DANGER OF THAT.
TAK
TAK

...RAINING DOWN ON US FROM THE SKY.
ACCORDING TO OUR FORECAST, THE ELECTROMAGNETIC WAVES ARE DUE TO ARRIVE ANY MINUTE...
AND TODAY WE'RE GOING TO REPLICATE OUR PREVIOUS EXPERIMENT. JUST AS ON THAT DAY, SOLAR FLARES ARE AT THEIR PEAK.
ZAAA
THIS CONTRAP-TION...
...LOOKS LIKE...
...SOME KINDA PASSAGE-WAY TO THE AFTER-LIFE.

FIVE MINUTES TILL ELECTRO-MAGNETIC WAVE BURST!
OOGA
OOGA
.....
COM-MENCING PLASMA SHIELD GENER-ATION!
OOGA
ALL PERSONNEL, CLEAR THE DECK!
OOGA
OOGA
ROMEO UNIT, BOARD YOUR VEHICLES!
OOGA
OOGA
OOGA


...RIDING IN THAT VEHICLE?
CLOP
YOU AREN'T...
CLOP

...I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GET A GOOD LOOK-SEE AT WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN.
TREMBLE
CLOP
CLOP
IF I SHUT MYSELF UP IN ONE OF THOSE TURTLE-SHELLS...

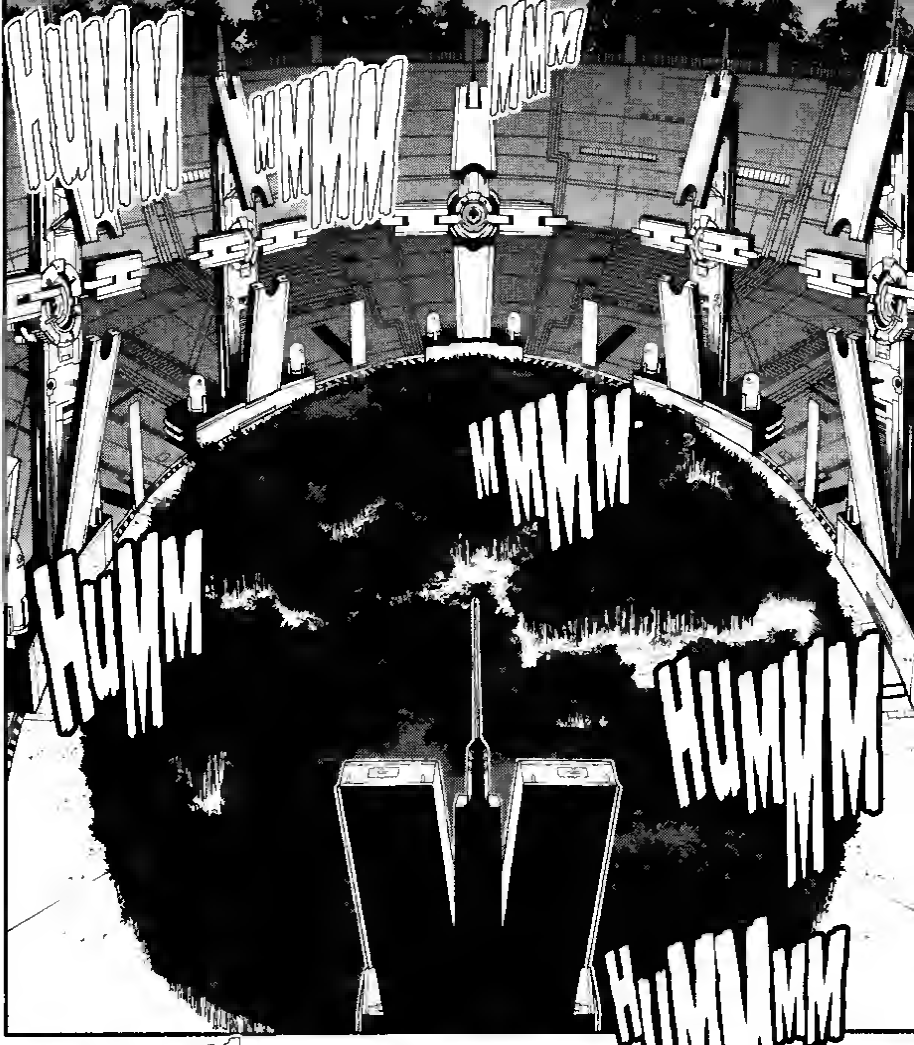

YEAH...
...THAT'S WHY I LEFT.
RUMBLE
...UNLIKE THE OTHERS HERE.
YOU ARE TRULY...

WHIRR
FWIKK
WHIRRR
WHIRR
WHIRR
HUMM
HUMM
CRACKLE
PLASMA SHIELD BUILDING UP!
SHIELD AT MAXIMUM POWER!

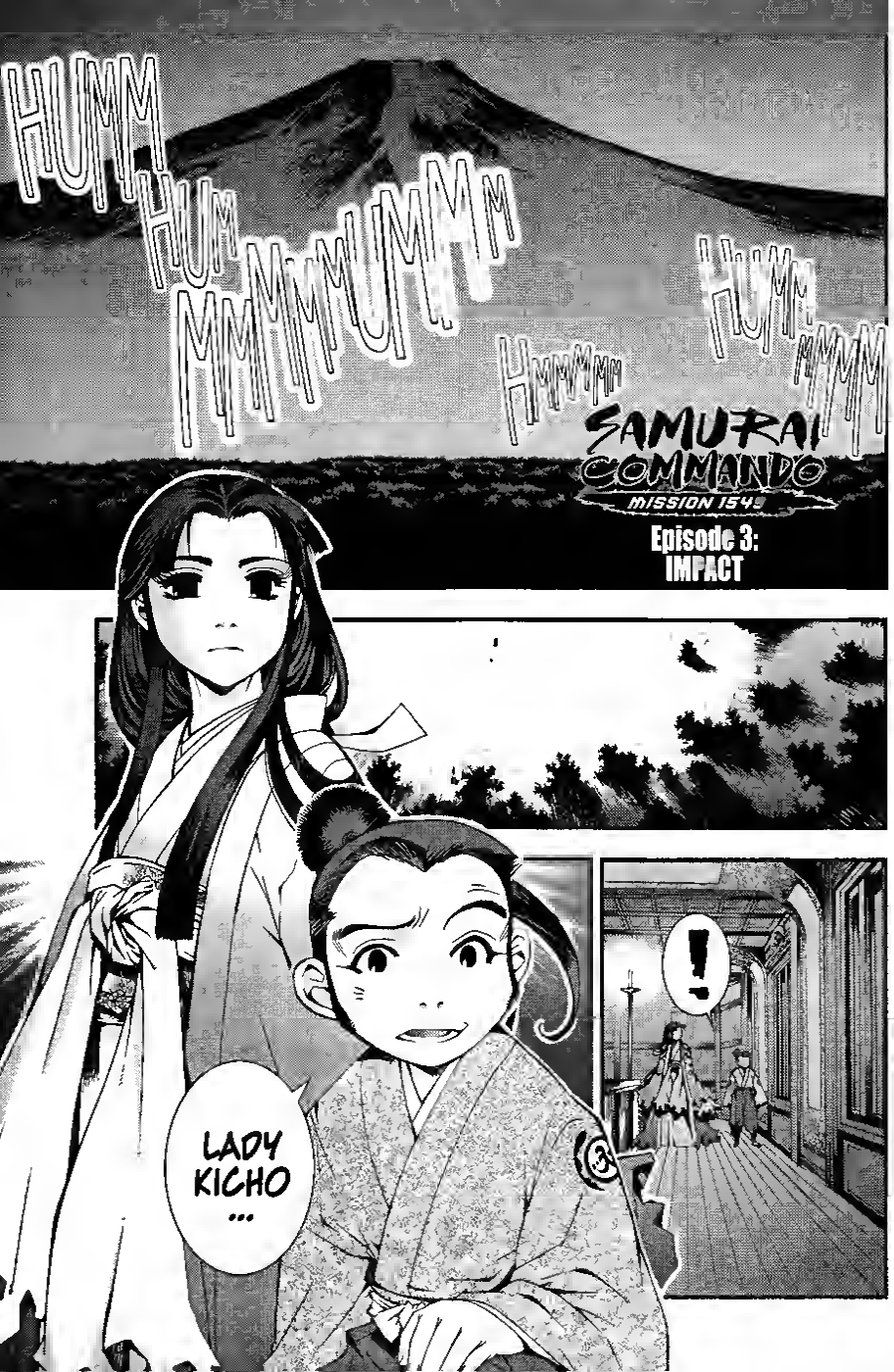
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
HAVE YOU SEEN THE FACES OF THESE SOLDIERS?
WHAT?
THEY'RE FRIGHTENED!
WELL, WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?!
I'M SCARED!

CRACKLE
THEN WHY DID YOU ASSENT TO COME?!
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE

TO SEE FOR MYSELF ...
... TO SEE WHETHER THE ERA I LIVE IN...
... DESERVES TO BE ERASED.



Episode 2 "Ambition and Purpose and...": THE END


HUMM
HUM
MMMMMUMM
HMMMM
HUMMMM
SAMURAI COMMANDO
MISSION 154
Episode 3:
IMPACT
LADY KICHO ...
!

...WE SAW SIX YEARS AGO.
THAT'S THE SAME KIND OF LIGHT...
CRACKLE
RECON-NAISSANCE IS COMPLETE FROM A LINE TO B LINE.
ALL CLEAR.

O-3, PATROL D LINE IN THE REAR.
O-3 COPIES.
O-2 HERE.
AS BEFORE, ALL CLEAR.
I DON'T LIKE THIS.
TAKE A DETOUR AROUND C LINE, THEN RETURN TO RECON POST.
.....

WAS THE FOREST AROUND FUJI...
O-3 HERE. WE HAVE REACHED POINT.
...REALLY THIS QUIET IN THE OLD DAYS?
MMM... I AM NOT THE KIND OF MAN...
...WHO WOULD TAKE NOTICE OF SUCH THINGS.
AND YET...
...THERE'S SOME-THING...
SPOKEN LIKE A TRUE SAMURAI.
YOUR INSTINCTS HAVE GOTTA BE A LOT SHARPER THAN THOSE OF SELF-DEFENSE TROOPS LIVING IN PEACE-TIME.
THIS IS O-2. YOU COULD HEAR A PIN DROP HERE.

I'M NOT GOIN' BY INSTINCTS.
CREAK
SO HOW IS IT THAT YOU FEEL SOMETHING IS WRONG?
BUT YOU ARE FROM "PEACE-TIME" AS WELL.
I JUST QUESTION WHETHER TAKESHI MATOBA WOULD REALLY ALLOW US...
...TO GET A FOOTHOLD HERE SO EASILY.
...HAS TOTALLY CHANGED THESE PAST SIX YEARS ...
UM... IF THE MATOBA-SAN THAT I KNOW ...
CONTINUE ADVANCING TOWARDS OUR ESTABLISHED RENDEZVOUS POINT.
BUT WE'RE NOT ENCOUN-TERING ANY RESIS-TANCE.
THIS IS O-1. WE ARE WIDENING THE SCOPE OF OUR RECON.

...WE POSSESS EQUIPMENT BEYOND THE WILDEST DREAMS OF PEOPLE IN THIS ERA.
EVEN SUPPOSING THAT COLONEL MATOBA DOES PUT UP A FIGHT...
... BE ABLE TO MAKE IT TO THE RENDEZ-VOUS.
...AND IS NOW LIVING IN HARMONY WITH NATURE... THEN THE GUYS WILL PROBABLY ...
I'M SURE HE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO MAINTAIN MUCH OF IT OVER THE YEARS. AS LONG AS WE HANDLE THIS SITUATION ...
... ACCORDING TO THE PLAN, I DON'T SEE ANY PROBLEMS CROPPING UP.
TRUE, SOME HARDWARE GOT OVER WITH THE COLONEL AND HIS MEN...BUT THAT WAS SIX YEARS AGO.
SO WHAT ARE YOU...
... AFRAID OF?

WHAT AM I AFRAID OF?
.....
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING THAT SCARES ME...
TAK
TAK
...OR SUPERIOR NUMBERS.
WHAT I'M NOT AFRAID OF IS THE LATEST TECH-NOLOGY...
...AND THAT'S ...
...THE BRAIN OF TAKESHI MATOBA.

TAK
...I DON'T MIND A BIT IF YOU'RE A WORRYWART ...
I'M TEMPTED TO SETTLE DOWN HERE MYSELF.
WELL ...
O-3 HERE. ALL'S QUIET. ONLY THING WE CAN HEAR IS THE BABBLING BROOK.
I DON'T NEED A CHICKEN LITTLE RUNNING AROUND, FILLING THE TROOPS' HEADS WITH GROUNDLESS ANXIETY...
...CRACKLE ...
...WE'LL ASK YOU, OKAY?
... BUT WHEN WE WANT YOUR ADVICE...
RUFFLE
AK
AK

CRACKLE
D LINE! WE'RE UNDER ATTACK, NUMBER OF ASSAILANTS UNKNOWN!
ZAA
ZAA
THEY'RE GONNA HIT US AGAIN!
ONE, WHERE-ABOUTS UNKNOWN!
THREE WOUNDED, TWO DEAD!
WAITING FOR ORDERS, SIR!
WHAT ARE OUR ORDERS?
REQUEST PERMISSION TO OPEN FIRE!
ZAAA
ZAAA
ZAAA
ZAAA
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE

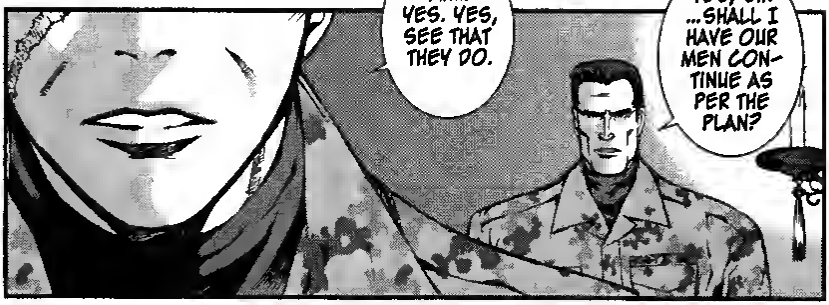
!!
TO
OP
URKK!!
ENEMY ATTACK!
ENEMY ATTACK!
TH
OP
FWISH-PWISH

TROOP
TROOP
TROOP
WE'VE LOST CONTACT WITH O-3!
TAAA
TAAA
TAAA
TAAA
TAAA
DON'T BREAK RANKS! HOLD THE PERIMETER!
YOU MAY ONLY FIRE WARNING SHOTS!
ALL SQUADS, STAY IN FORMATION!
SWISH
A DUAL ATTACK ON THE SCOUTING PARTIES AND HEADQUARTERS?!

O-5, SEARCH FOR O-3...
!!
WHA—

RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
WHAT THE HELL ...
...IS THAT ?!

I'M HERE TO REPORT, SIR.
TAP
TAP
FOLLOWING YOUR PREVIOUSLY INSTRUCTED ORDERS, THEY ENGAGED IN COMBAT.
ACCORDING TO THE GUARD UNIT, APPROXIMATELY SEVEN MINUTES AGO, OUR ADVANCE GUARD MADE CONTACT WITH THE NEISEI UNIT.
.....
SO THEY'RE HERE AT LAST.


YES, SIR ...SHALL I HAVE OUR MEN CONTINUE AS PER THE PLAN?
AH... YES. YES, SEE THAT THEY DO.

LADY KICHO, I'M GOING TO BORROW... YOUR FAMILY'S ...
...SOLDIERS.

YES.....
...AS YOU WISH...
SIP

COLONEL! COLONEL MATOBA!
I CANNOT GIVE YOU PERMISSION TO FIRE! I REPEAT, I CAN'T GIVE YOU PERMISSION TO FIRE!
WE CAN'T HOLD THE LINE!
DO EVERYTHING ELSE THAT YOU CAN TO HOLD YOUR POSITION!
SIR, REQUEST PERMISSION TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY!

CLANG!
REQUEST PERMISSION TO FIGHT BACK, SIR!
WE CAN'T KEEP OUR POSITION HERE!

SIR, PLEASE!!

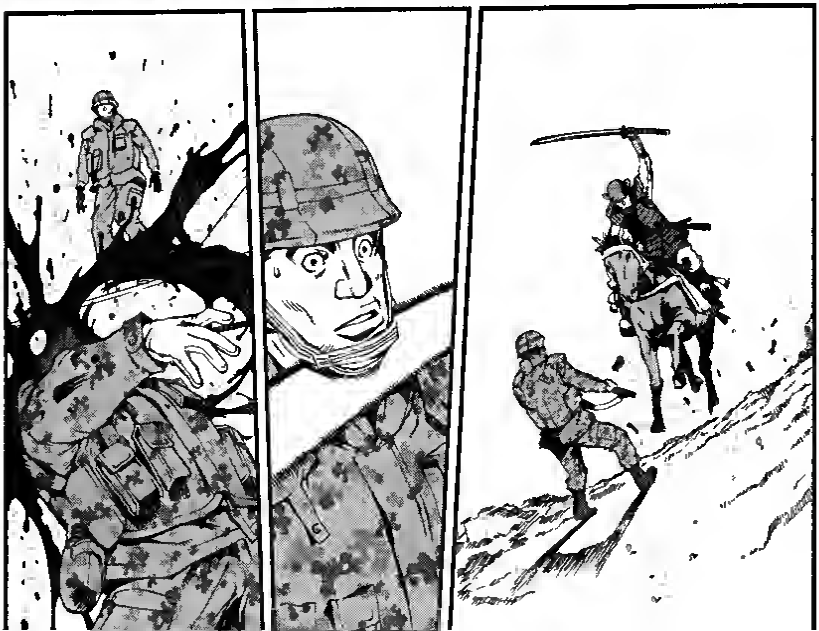
UWAA!

ALL TROOPS FALL BACK!
I CAN'T GIVE PERMISSION WITHOUT KNOWING THE NUMBERS WE'RE FACING!

VROOM
BAD
BADOOM

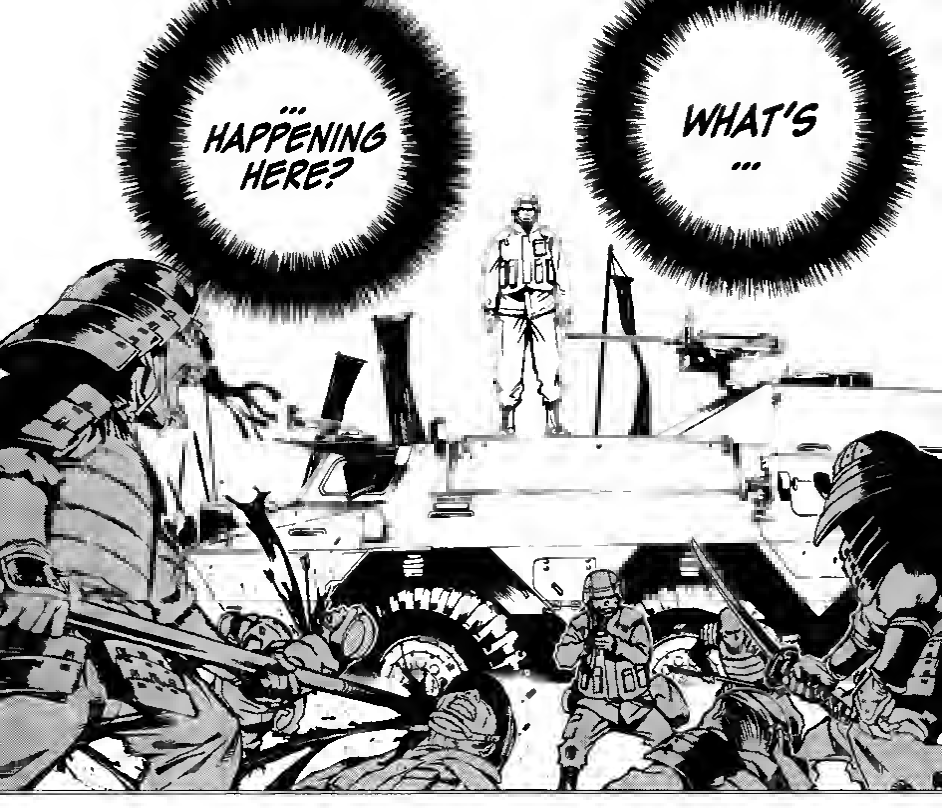
WHICH SQUAD DID THAT ?!

CLOP CLOPCLOPCLOP



RUMBLE-RUMBLE!!
RUMBLE
DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN
AAAHAAH
AAH

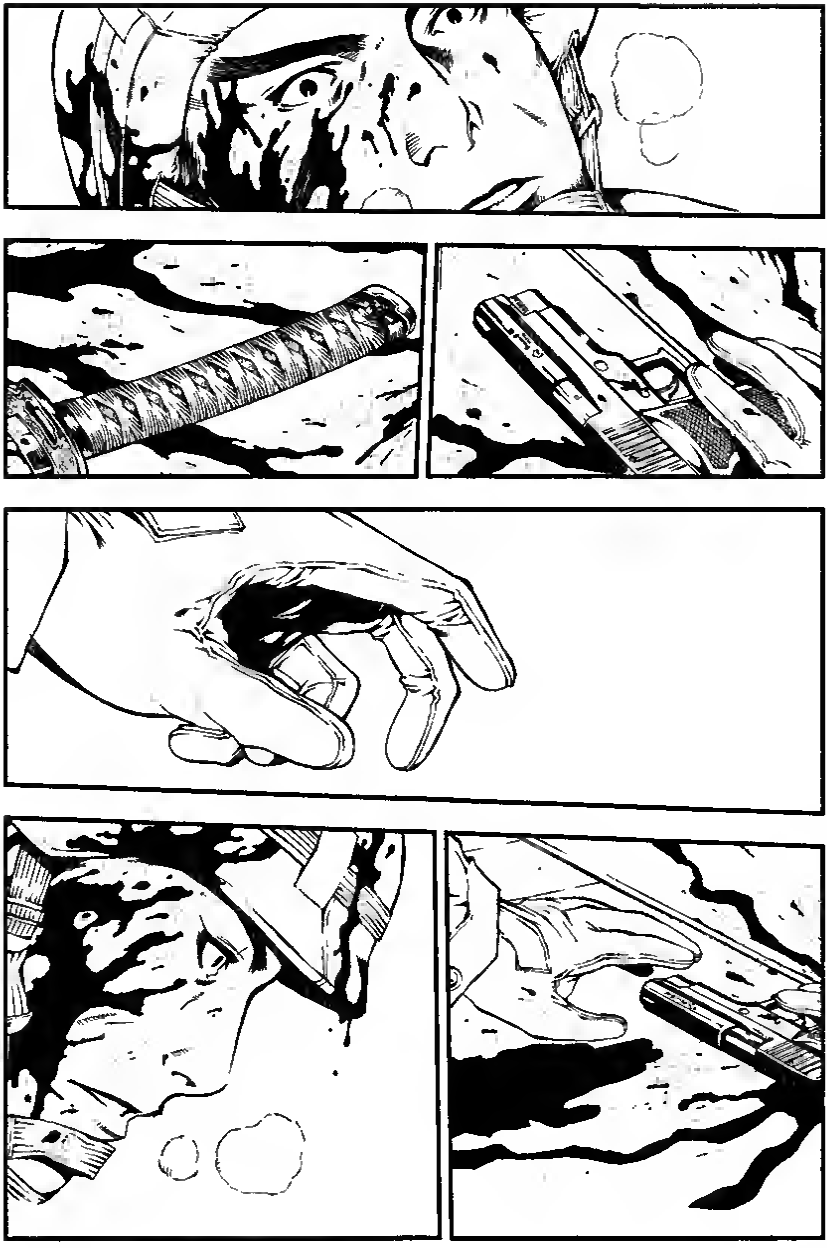
W-WHAT THE HELL'S WRONG WITH THESE GUYS?! GUYS DROPPIN' ON EITHER SIDE OF 'EM...
...BUT THEY JUST KEEP COMIN'!
Pow
Pow
Pow
HEY! THEY JUST GOT ISHI-KAWA!
WHAT ...
WE'RE BEIN' SLAUGHT-ERED HERE!
...WHAT IS THIS?

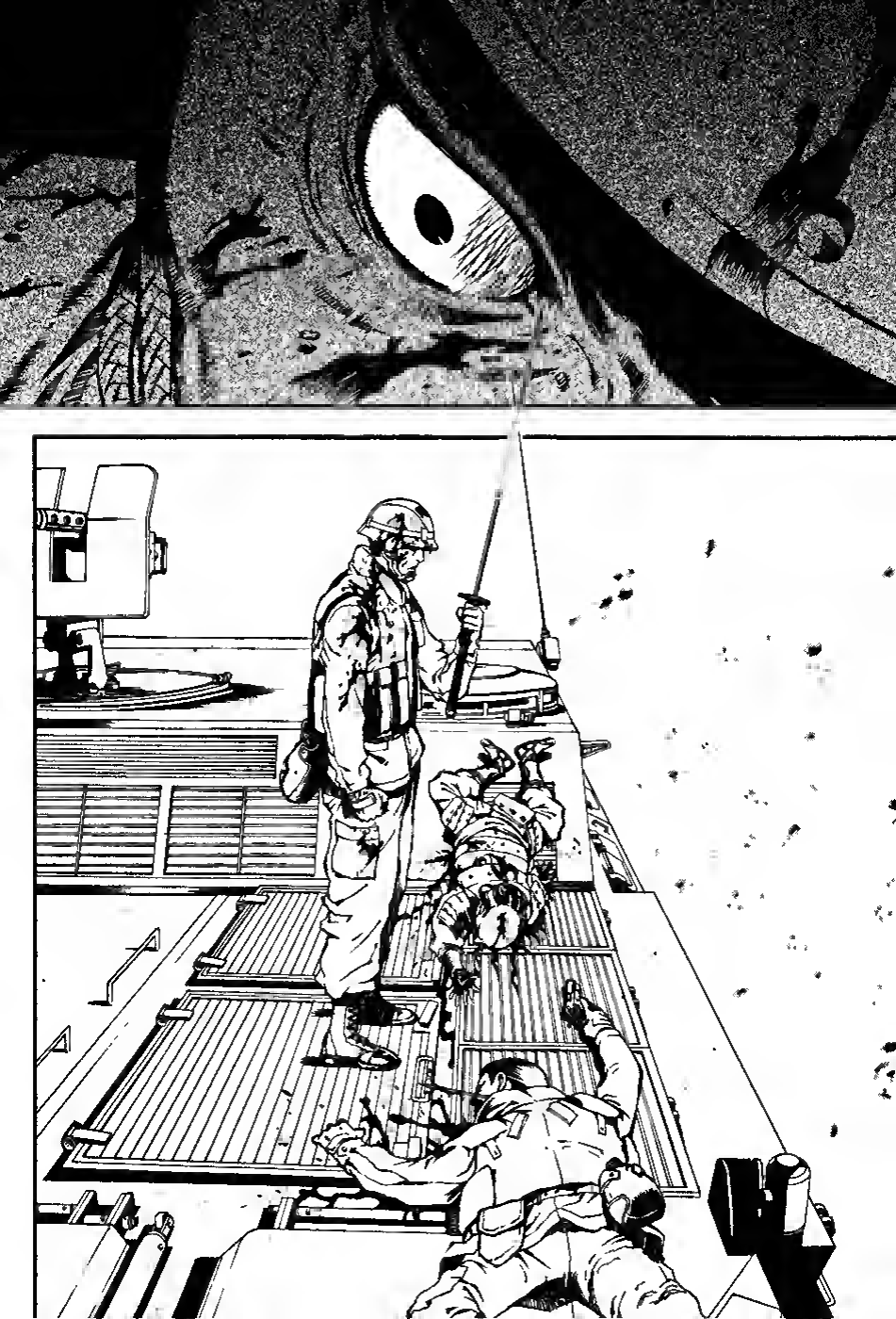

...
HAPPENING
HERE?
WHAT'S
...

HUFF
HUFF
CLANG!!

ゼェゼェ
ゼェゼェ
...NO MATTER WHAT THE SITUATION ...
WE'RE MEMBERS OF THE SELF-DEFENSE FORCES...
POK
POK
POK
POK
...WE'RE FORBIDDEN TO DO ANY-THING BUT DEFEND OUR-SELVES.
SWISH

HUFF
HUFF
WH-
UMP

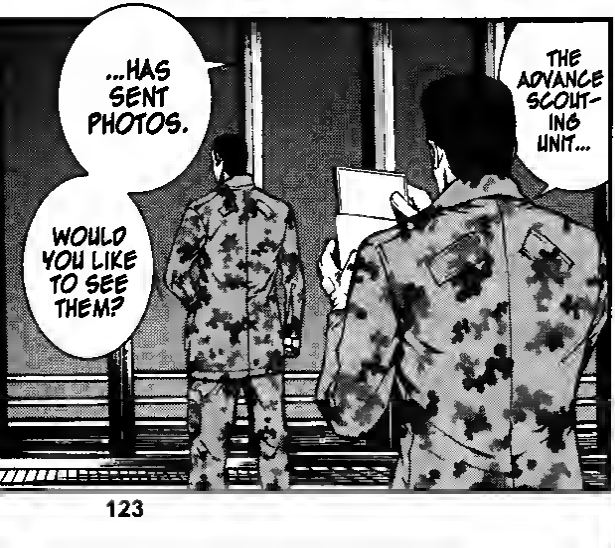


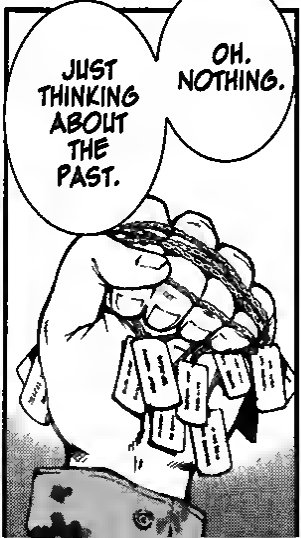


YOU HAVE LEAVE ...
SQUEEZE
...TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY.
HIT THEM WITH EVERY-THING WE'VE GOT.

COLONEL MATOBA.
...SIR.

WHAT'S WRONG?
HM?


THE ADVANCE SCOUTING UNIT...
...HAS SENT PHOTOS.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THEM?


OH. NOTHING.
JUST THINKING ABOUT THE PAST.

RUSTLE
RUSTLE
FLIP
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

HEE HEE HEE!
.....

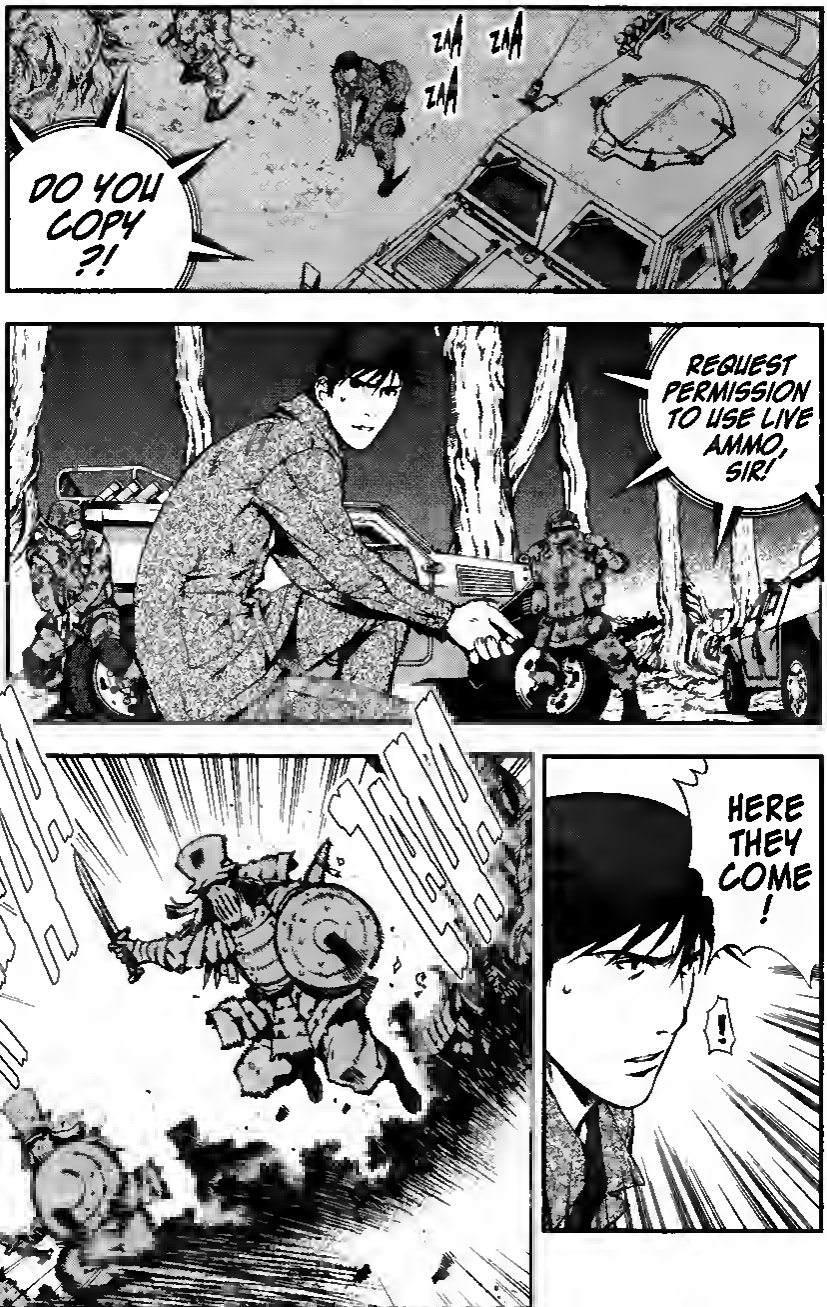
KASHI-MA...
...IS IT REALLY YOU...?
...HAVE YOU COME, TOO?!
HA HAA HAA HAH
KASHI-MA...
...YOU...?
HUH...?
SIR?!
SI...
IT SEEMS THAT GOD...
...HAS BEEN LISTENING TO MY THOUGHTS!!
HA
.....

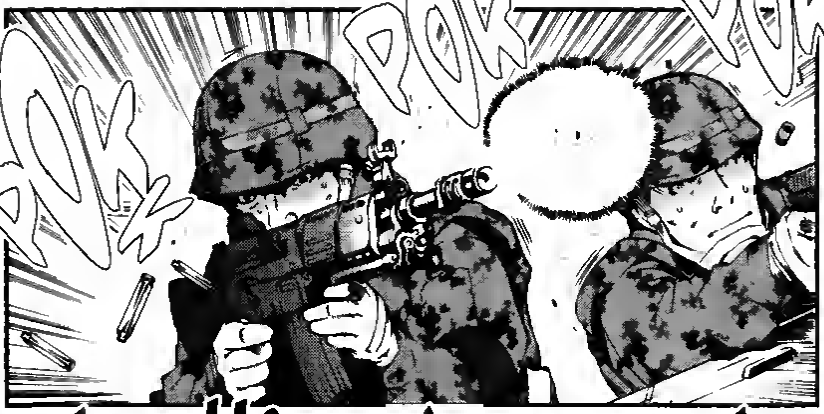
KASHIMA
!!
YOU'LL SHOW ME WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED ...

SAMURAI
COMMANDO
MISSION 1549

ADVANCE SQUAD O-4 HAS RETREATED AS FAR AS C LINE!
WE'VE LOST CONTACT WITH O-2 AND O-3!
GO GO
WE CAN'T HOLD OUR GROUND!
THIS IS O-6! WE'VE JUST CROSSED A LINE!
AAA

SHIT!
WE CAN'T HOLD OUR GROUND!
SAMURAI COMMANDO
MISSION 1549
Episode 4: COMPLICATION
FLICK
!
REQUEST PERMISSION TO FIRE LIVE ROUNDS!
WHUMP
I REPEAT, REQUESTING PERMISSION TO FIRE LIVE ROUNDS!


ZAA
ZAA
ZAA
DO YOU COPY ?!
REQUEST PERMISSION TO USE LIVE AMMO, SIR!
HERE THEY COME !
!


POK
POK
POK

CHOK
CHOK
CHOK
CHOK
CHOK

CLATER
CLATER
CLATER
CLATER

GULP

CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
CREAK
CREAK
!!
...FRICKIN' ZOMBIES!
JUST LIKE...

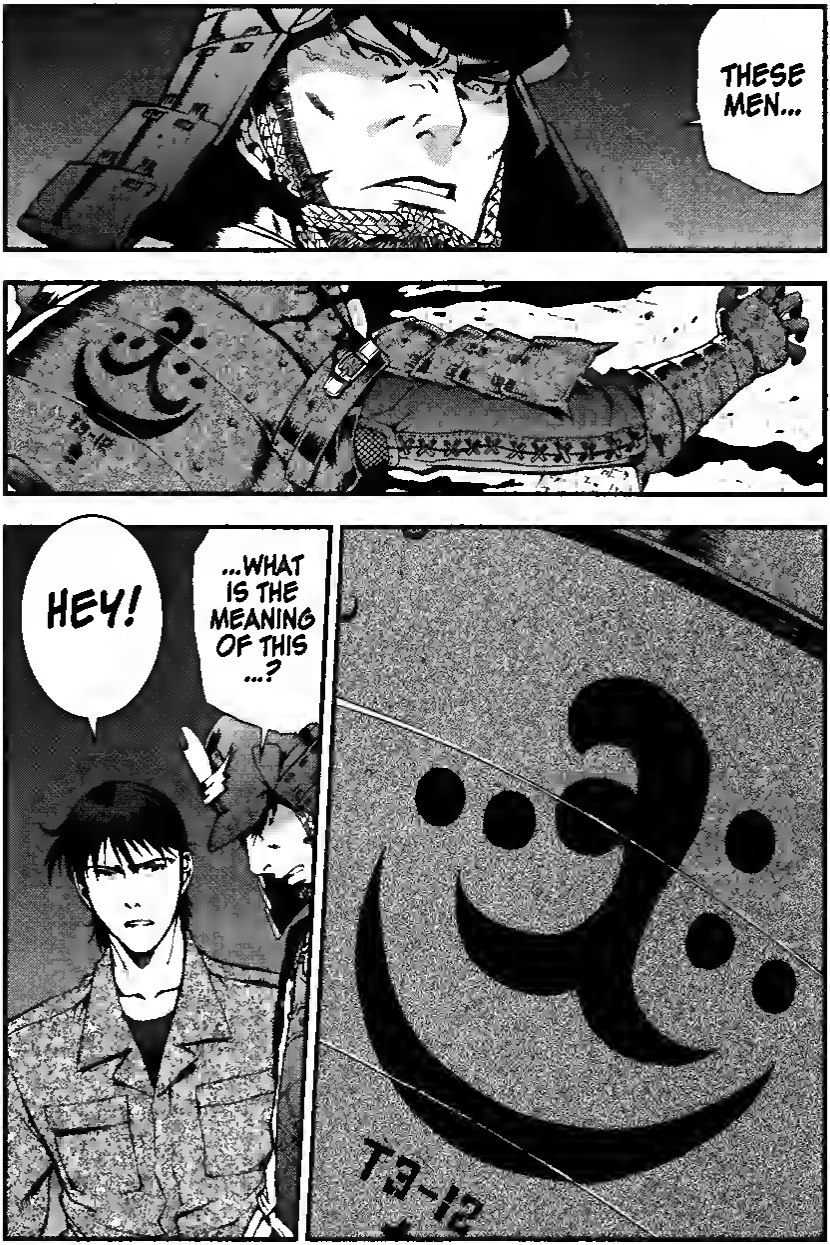
...AT SUITS OF ARMOR?! THEY BARELY MAKE A DENT!
BUT WHAT DO YOU EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE FIRIN' TRANQUILIZER DARTS ...
COME TO THINK OF IT...
...IS MATOBA-SAN BEHIND THAT, TOO...?
...ARE LIKE ANCIENT JAPANESE-WESTERN HYBRIDS!
...THOSE SUITS...

RUSH
SWISH
!!

WA
CR
CRA
K

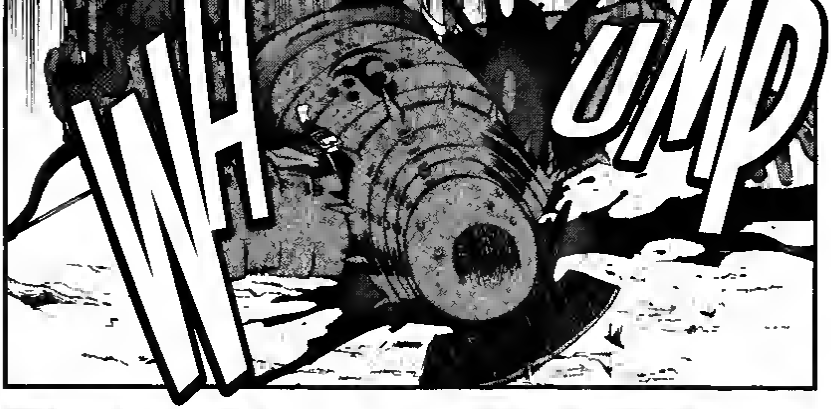
FWSSH

...
GOTTEN THIS FAR?
HAS HE REALLY ...
TH-THANKS.
WHUMP
RATTLE
.....
.....
CLATTER CLATTER
WHAT'S WRONG?
HEY.
ZAA


THESE MEN...
T3-12
HEY!
...WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS ...?
T3-12

PRINCESS ...
...DID YOU HAVE TO...?
ARE THEY ...?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
?!
SWISH

LAAA
THUNK
THUNK
THUNK
KALEAAK
?!
WHACK


WH
UMP

...REPAY THE KINDNESS I RECEIVED IN THE HEISEI WORLD!
I DID THIS TO...

WHERE ARE YOU GOING ?!
HEY!
SWISH
?!
WHAT WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
SHICHIBE !!

THAT MAN...
I KNOW THEY'RE TOUGH AND THEY'VE GOT NUMBERS, BUT FIGHT A DEFENSIVE BATTLE OUT THERE!
POKPOK
ALL SQUADS, MUSTER EVERYTHING YOU HAVE TO HOLD THE LINE!
RUSTLE
...FIGHT A DE-FENSIVE BATTLE!
I REPEAT ...
TATA
TATA

RECON-NOITERING ENEMY MOVE-MENTS.
TA-TA-TA
KASHIMA-SAN! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?!
ZAAH
MORI-SAN...
...AREN'T YOU EQUIPPED WITH LIVE AMMU-NITION?
...IF YOU INSIST ON RUNNING OFF ON YOUR OWN!
POK
YOU'RE A CIVILIAN, BUT I CAN'T GUARANTEE YOUR PRO-TECTION...
I'M NOT OBLIGED TO ANSWER TO THE OBSERV-ER.
.....
WHERE ARE THE REAL BULLETS ?
MORI-SAN!
TA-TA-TA
.....
POK
POK

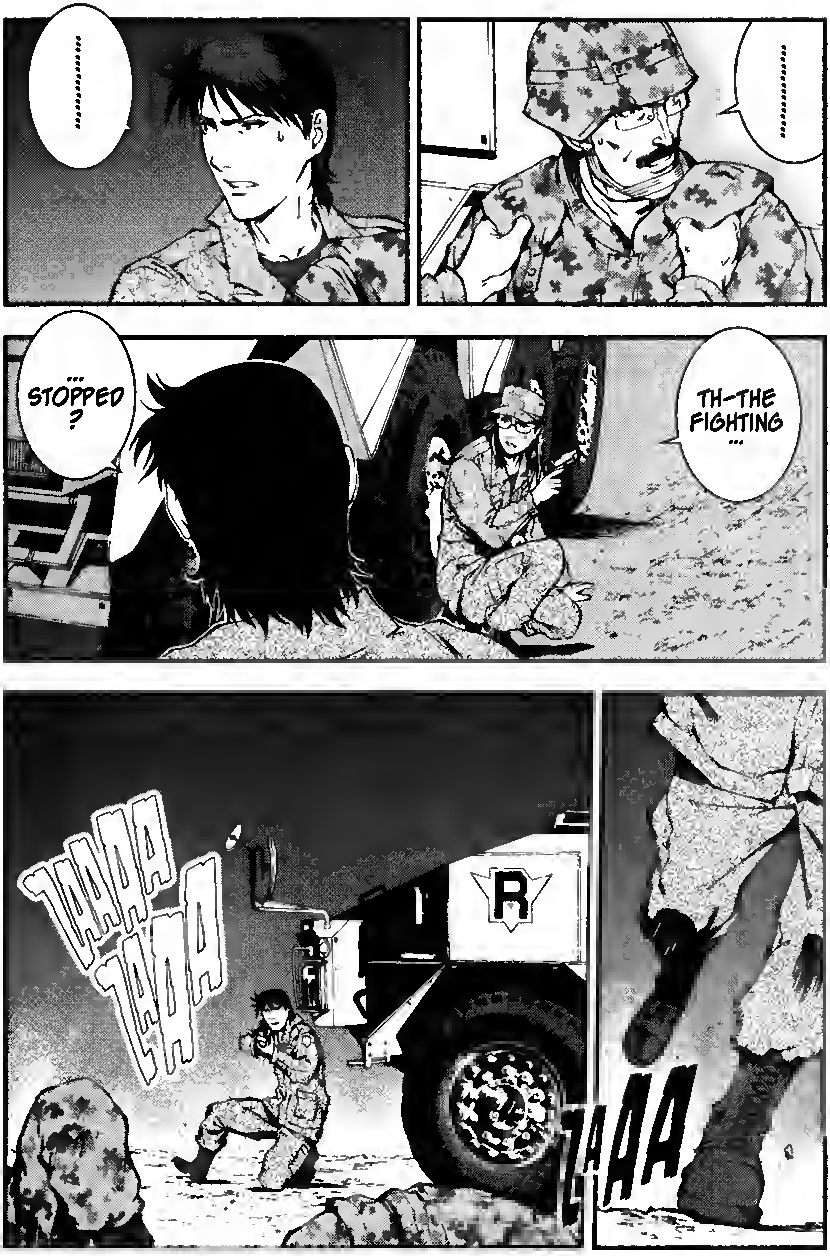
TA-TA-TA
I SAW THE CASES WITH REAL AMMO!
POK
NOW'S NO TIME TO BE PLAYIN' FRICKIN' GAMES!
NOW'S THE TIME TO USE IT! LET'S COUNTER-ATTACK!
YOU DID BRING 'EM, RIGHT?
...
WITH THE TRANQUI-LIZER BULLETS.
WE ONLY FIRE...
POK POK
.....

BAM
THOSE BASTARDS AREN'T THE CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS WE'VE STUDIED ABOUT IN SCHOOL!
OPEN YOUR EYES, GODDAMN IT, AND LOOK AT WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT HERE!
...AND ARE CARRYING ROMAN-LIKE SHIELDS, FOR CHRIS-SAKES!
THEY'RE COVERED HEAD TO TOE IN METAL ARMOR...
THE ONES ON HORSES GOT LANCES...
THEY'RE EXPERT AT SWITCHING BACK AND FORTH FROM JAPANESE LONG SWORDS TO THOSE MACHETE THINGS!

NOW LOOK AT US!
...AND TO TOP IT OFF, THE ARCHERS HAVE WRIST CROSS-BOWS!
...AND NOT EVERYBODY'S GOT BODY ARMOR...SO IF OUR GUYS GET DRAWN INTO A CLOSE-RANGE FIGHT...
...THEY DON'T STAND A SNOWFLAKE'S CHANCE IN HELL!
FOR CLOSE QUARTER SKIRMISHES, THE ONLY THING THEY'RE EQUIPPED WITH IS A KNIFE...
BUT...
SO OUR GUYS CAN'T DO SHIT ON OFFENSE OR DEFENSE!
AND THOSE TRANQ BULLETS YOU KEEP YAPPIN' ABOUT...
...CAN'T EVEN GET THROUGH THE ARMOR!

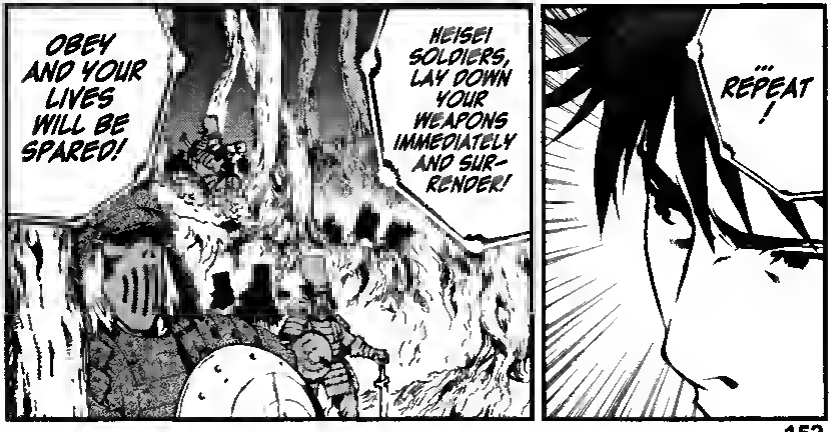
ALL WE NEED IS THE ABILITY TO SHOOT LIVE AMMO TO TURN THIS AROUND!
POK
WHUMP
IF WE GET SURROUNDED WE'LL BE SITTING DUCKS!
MORI-SAN!
POK
...HE EXPECTS US TO SHOOT NOTHING MORE THAN ...
IF THE ARMY WE'RE UP AGAINST WAS FORMED BY TAKESHI MATOBA...
...THOSE DAMN TRANGS!
AND THEY KNOW THAT'S HOW THEY CAN SLAUGHTER YOU!
SHAKE
...GOODAMN IT! WE'RE THE SELF-DEFENSE FORCES!
WE... WE CAN'T DO IT...

TA TA TA TA TA
EVEN SO...
.....
POK POK
TA TA TA
?!


.....
.....
STOPPED ?
TH-THE FIGHTING
R
DAAA DAAA
DAAA

DUN DUN DUN DUN

SKREE
SKREE
SKREE
SKREE

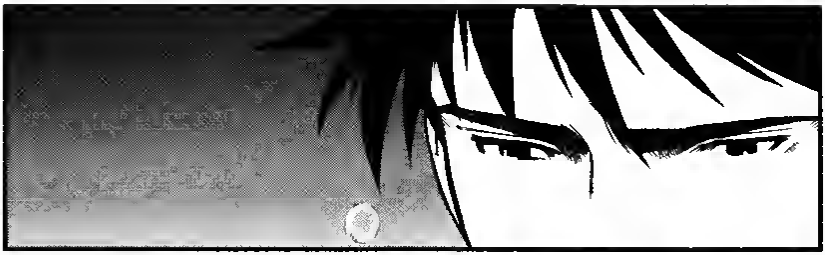

OBEY AND YOUR LIVES WILL BE SPARED!
HEISEI SOLDIERS, LAY DOWN YOUR WEAPONS IMMEDIATELY AND SURRENDER!
...REPEAT!

JESUS, THEY'VE EVEN GOT THAT?
HEISEI SOLDIERS, LAY DOWN YOUR WEAPONS IMMEDIATELY...
A BULLHORN?
SKREE
I REPEAT!!
THIS MERCY IS GRANTED TO YOU BY ORDER OF...
...YOUR LIVES WILL BE SPARED!
...HEAD SAMURAI OF THE SAITO CLAN, SHICHIBE IINUMA!

.....
OH, NO...
.....

RATTLE

RATTLE
RATTLE



HEISEI SOLDIERS, SURRENDER ...
...AND YOUR LIVES SHALL BE SPARED!

SO SWEARS ...
...SHI-CHIBE IINUMA !!

HE'S SELLING US OUT ...?
NO.....
HE'S JUST COME HOME ...
... THAT'S ALL.

MORI-SAN...
...LET'S DO WHAT HE SAYS.
END OF THE LINE, HUH?
.....
I KNOW THAT FOLLOWING THE LOGIC OF THE SDF, IT'D MAKE A WONDERFULLY HEROIC TALE TO GET WIPED OUT TO THE LAST MAN...
KA-CHA
A-ARE YOU INSANE?!
...THEN THAT'S A DIFFERENT STORY.
NOW, IF YOU WANNA CHANGE YOUR MIND AND PASS OUT REAL AMMUNITION TO WHOEVER WE'VE GOT LEFT...
...BUT OUR END...
...ALSO MEANS THE END OF THE WORLD, DOESN'T IT?

...TO THINK LOGICALLY ABOUT THIS.
THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY...
.....
...I'LL LISTEN TO YOU.
CLATTER
FROM NOW ON, OBSERV-ER...

.....
I APOLO-GIZE.
NAH, YOU'VE GOT NOTHIN' TO BE SORRY ABOUT.
WE'RE BOTH IN SERVICE TO HIGHER-UPS.

HELL, EVEN AFTER YOU REALIZED THE GUY YOU STRUCK DOWN SAVING ME WAS ONE OF YOUR OWN...
...YOU SAVED MY ASS AGAIN BY KILLING THE NEXT ONE.
I OUGHTA BE THANKING YOU HERE.
DAAA
.....
DAAA
HOWEVER IT SHAKES OUT FROM HERE ON IN...
...I GOT NO GRUDGE AGAINST YOU.
CLANK
CLANK

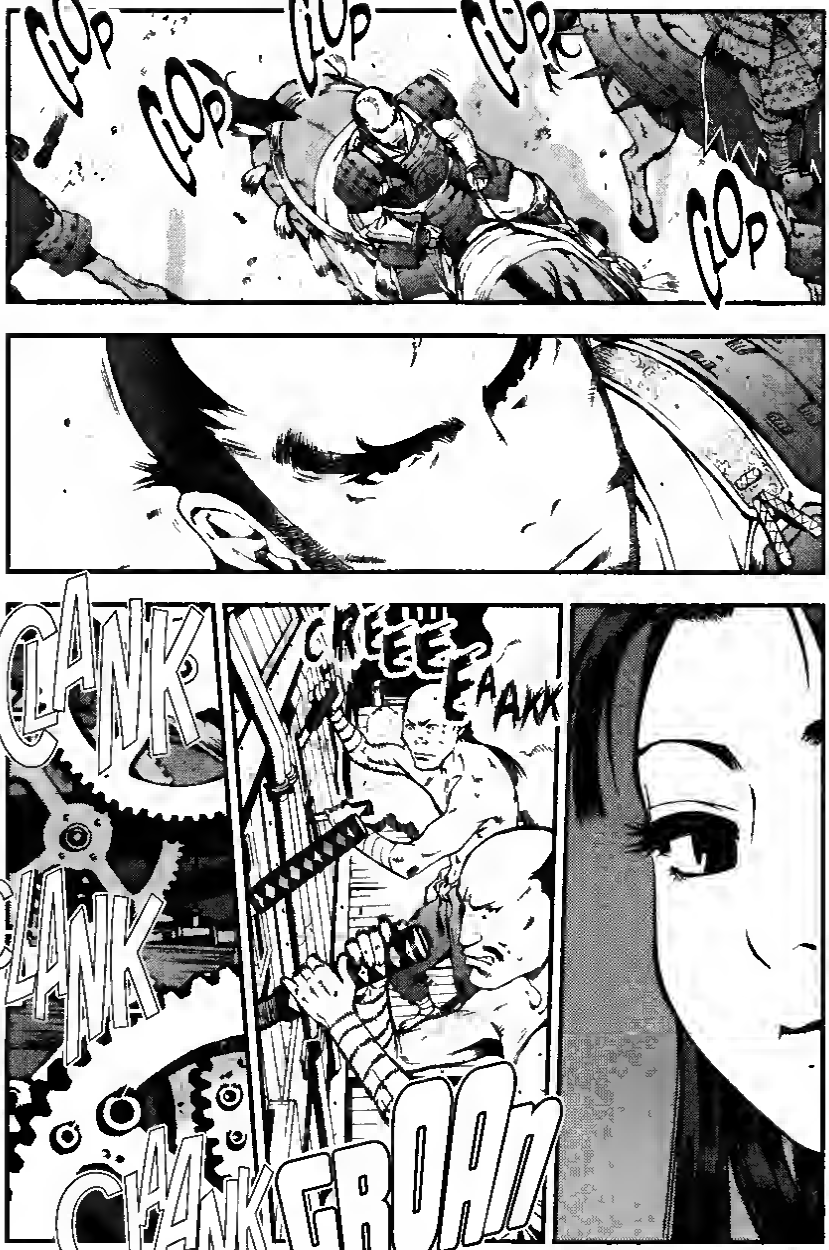
...TO BE A SAMURAI SOMETIMES.
MUST BE TOUGH...
clink
ZAAA
.....
I'M SORRY ...
EOp EOp EOp EOp

RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE

.....
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
WHAT ON EARTH...
...IS THAT?!
ZAA
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
WHA—?!

DUN
DUN
DUN
DUN

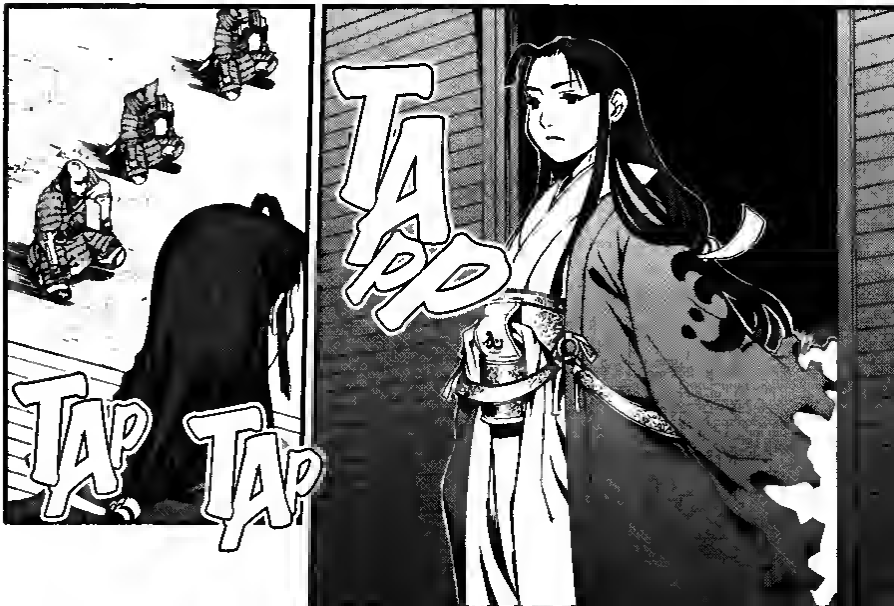
RA TTLE RA TTLE RA TTLE RA TTLE
WHAT THE HELL ...
...IS THAT ?!
WHAT'S...
...HE TRYING TO DO ?
WHIRR WHIIRR


CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
CLANK
CLANK
CLANK
CREEEEEAAAK
GROAN

WHIRR
WHIRR
WHIRR
R
R
WHIRR
WHIRR
WHIRR
WHIRR
The courtyard of Anmo Castle
Wh

DUN
DUN

REPRESENTING OOSAN SAITO OF THE SAITO CLAN ...LADY KICHO.


TAP
TAP
TAP

TAP
TAP
TAP
AND THE LORD OF ANMO CASTLE...
...DUKE TAKESHI MATOBA.

Episode 4
"Complication": THE END

SAMURAI COMMANDO

MISSION 1549

(art)
Ark Performance

(story)
Harutoshi Fukui

(original idea)
Ryo Hanmura

(assistants)
Jun Yanagisawa
Tomio Inahara

(special thanks to)
Arihiro Yoshida

[Afterword by Harutoshi Fukui author of Samurai Commando: Mission 1549]

"Working with Geniuses..."

In my line of work, I tend to run into geniuses in the most unexpected places. Kenji Mitsuya, head artist at Ark Performance, certainly fits the bill.

Generally, the difficult stage of a manga story is called the "name," and it's the rough storyboards. Well, when I was shown the "name" for "Samurai Commando: Mission 1549," the drawings were so exact that I was shocked. This can't be the "name," I thought. I had to ask to see the preliminary sketches that he'd made before they set pen to paper! When I asked Mr. Mitsuya about it, however, he replied that they were the "name" after all and that he just knocked them out all at once without sketching and re-sketching. I mean, I'd had enough surprise to fill my quota that day, he'd taken a "B4" size piece of paper, cut it up into four boxes, each representing one page of, and then put the "name" on that. What the writer would see was a blown-up copy of the original B4 size.

[Continued on next page]

* B4 is a standard paper size used in most countries, including Japan. It is slightly longer than standard American "letter" sized paper.

When it was pointed out to me, I noticed the panels that were scrawled over with pencil and tiny, detailed drawings that were crammed in. Working in such a small space, Mr. Mitsuyoshi explained to me with a grin, is easier on the hand since it doesn't have to move around as much. Still, I think about working on that scale. Splitting up B4-sized pieces of paper into four little panels that the area of each "page" would be about the same as one of the pages in this volume. Without any other rough sketching, Mr. Mitsuyoshi would knock out the "name," enlarge the panel and there would be the "clean copy" manga manuscript, ready for the finishing touches. If this style isn't a genius, then what is?

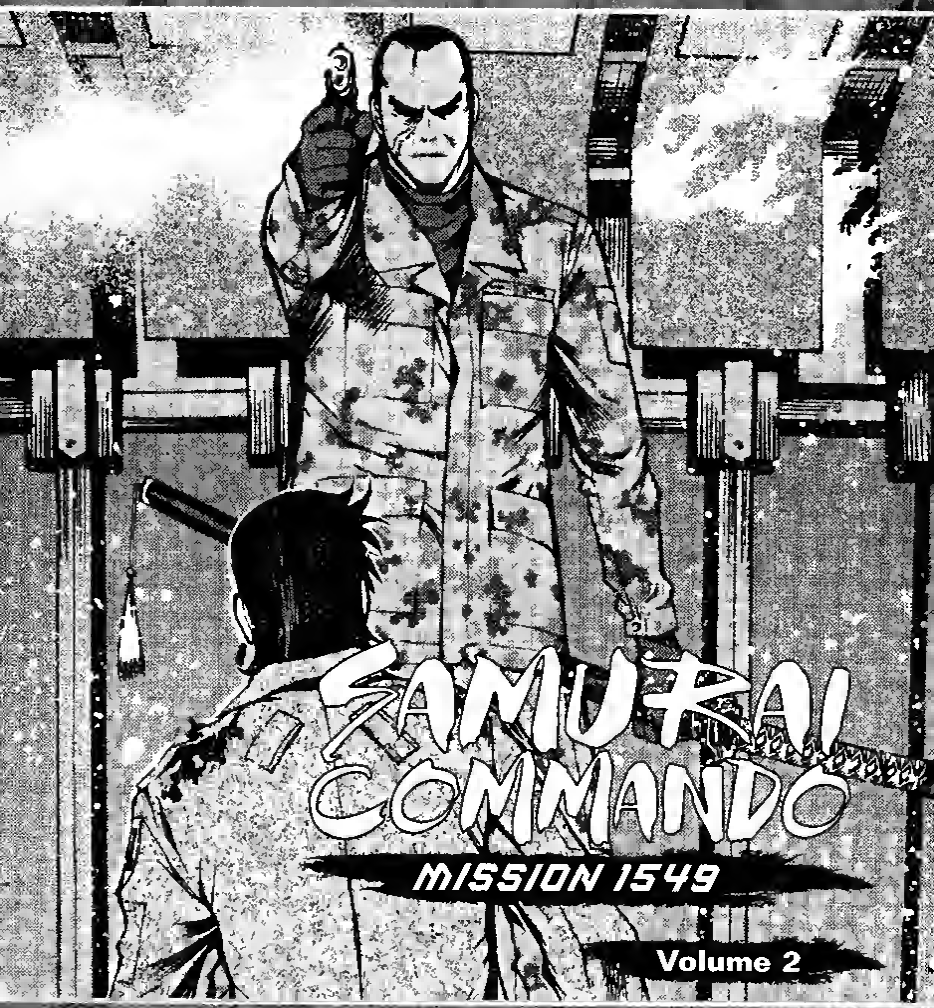
Mr. Mitsuyoshi's partner, Koichi Ishikawa, who is in charge of the formatting at Ark Performance, is no less a genius. When I offered Ark Performance the adaptation of "Samurai Commando: Mission 1549" into manga form, we mistakenly only sent the screenplay to the movie version when he should've also gotten my book, upon which the movie was based. Having only the movie script to compose a manga on, Mr. Ishikawa decided that there weren't enough "elements" to constitute a manga story, so in a very short period of time, he came up with a version of "Samurai Commando: Mission 1549" based on his own outlook on the world.

From my position as the writer and supervising editor, I had to reject his version and enforce the plot of the original that was submitted to him later. In my opinion, the version created by Mr. Ishikawa was thrilling and undoubtedly hardcore sci-fi. If they ever get the opportunity to do it, I'd love to read another manga version of the plot Mr. Ishikawa produced on his own, not as the author of "Samurai Commando: Mission 1549", but as a fan of theirs.

I guess when it comes to these two geniuses, they should be left to their own devices. However, the thing interfering with that is the bitter part of the adult world, namely commerce, which dictates the project be viewed in its totality and allows meddling by non-authors because of the scheduling demands of a tight budget. Surely, these two bear a heavy burden but their talent will see them through. Besides, I believe that sometimes being driven into a corner raises one's potential (really). Anyway, I hope that they stay the course and show us more of that turbulent age of Japan's civil wars.

[Harutoshi Fukui
April 2005]

CAN KASHIMA FOIL COLONEL MATOBA'S PLAN TO CHANGE HISTORY?! FIND OUT IN OCTOBER!



Art by Ark Performance / Story by Harutoshi Fukui / Original Idea by Ryo Hanmura.

Don't miss the exciting conclusion! Colonel Matoba and his forces hold Kashima, Rei, Mori and the other surviving S.D.F. members captive. Matoba has a secret weapon, a high-tech missile that he intends to use to blow up Castle Amo and its immediate environs. Kashima believes there is no way Matoba will make good on his threat, but can he really be sure? Will Kashima and his allies stop the Colonel and make it back to the future before it's too late?!

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